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The Year of Lysistrata

The general saloon bar reaction of national newspapers this week to the belated arrival into law of both the Sexual Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts provides a salutary reminder that the battle for women's rights in this country is by no means yet over. Not since the campaign of the Suffragettes have those who seek to uphold the cause of sexual equality found themselves subjected to such a sustained barrage of ridicule and scorn. It says much both for Miss Betty Lockwood and Lady Howe (the chairman and deputy chairman, respectively, of the Equal Opportunities Commission) that they should have contrived to keep their cool as remarkably as they have. It says, in a different way, at least as much about the attitudes of the predominantly male British Establishment that even *The Times* this week should have been able to find no more constructive comment to make than to express the hope that the new Commission would not descend to 'a comprehensive programme of busybodying'.

For 'busybodying', even given the strength of the laws now on the statute book, may well prove to be what further progress in the field of sexual equality requires. To take one isolated, though eloquent, illustration. There are 635 Members of the House of Commons: 27 of them are women – barely more than a total of 24 elected in 1945. True, one of them – a member of a group of only seven non-male MPs within her own party – is today Leader of the Opposition. That probably represents in our own domestic context the greatest single trophy of International Women's Year. It is dispiriting, however, that Mrs Thatcher should still be talking the age-old Tory *patois* about it being even in this field 'opportunities' that count and not 'numbers'. Numbers do count – as even this issue of the NEW STATESMAN with a solitary female by-line appearing among 23 articles, poems and reviews could be said to demonstrate.

Of course new laws cannot in themselves overturn centuries of conditioning; but they can at least remove the excuse for inaction. Until now the law – whether that governing pubs, newspaper advertising columns or even building societies – has provided a shield for traditional male prejudice. Not only has that shield now disappeared: women have also been provided with a sword with which to assert their right to equal treatment. Nothing could be more revealing than the way in which the masculine reaction to this new situation has developed. Women themselves, we are assured, will come bitterly to rue the day that brought them the promise of non-discrimination both financially and socially. Employers, trade unions, even wine-bar owners will find ways of cheating them yet. The Equal Pay Act in particular – a gratifying vindication for Mrs Castle, who promised 1975 as the final vesting date as long ago as the Labour Party conference of 1969 – is insidiously attacked as beckoning women towards wholesale redundancies rather than fairer pay packets.

The answer, though, is that laws never stand on their own. They are supposed, indeed intended, to reflect (if necessarily usually in a negative form) the kind of values and aspirations that any society at a particular moment considers important. The people today who view the removal of the legal bias operating against women as an unwarranted interference with individual liberty are the lineal descendants of those who in the last century saw the state's assertion of the right of all children to be educated as a gross infringement on the freedom of parental choice. That battle was eventually won by the collective weight of public opinion; and this one must be too.

To that end it would certainly help if Mrs Castle in her present position as Secretary of State for Social Security could persuade her cabinet colleagues to remove at least in the lifetime of this Parliament the last surviving disparity operating the other way. There was never much defence – and there is now no excuse – for state pension arrangements that preserve the wholly outdated principle of separate treatment as between women and men. The English language, after all, does not categorise by gender: nor should the British people, still less a British government acting in their name.

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Spotlight on Politics

Alan Watkins

Mr Wilson and Honours

That patron saint of Labour revisionists, R. H. Tawney, once engaged in an acrimonious correspondence (with Ramsay MacDonald, I seem to remember) on the subject of honours. He had been offered something or other, and replied that honours were baubles with which no proper socialist could or should toy. Oddly enough, this does not seem to have been Tawney's considered view. Or rather he appeared to believe that honours were not suitable for manifestly superior persons such as himself, but could with propriety be accepted by less luminous figures – by the willing horses of the people's party, so to speak. In this his opinion resembled that of Mr Harold Macmillan who, at the time of writing at any rate (a *caveat* that must be entered against the rest of this piece), retains his commoner status. Admittedly Tawney made his qualifications, erected fences. In a letter to the NEW STATESMAN he wrote: 'Let the next party conference lay down (1) that no member of the party shall accept adornments of this kind except from a Labour government, (2) that no Labour government shall confer any "honours" except such as are essential in order to enable it to do the job for which it was given power.'

There is perhaps more to be said for what is commonly assumed to be Tawney's view: that all honours, including, indeed especially, peerages have no place not just in the socialist commonwealth but even under a Labour government, which is not at all the same thing. Nevertheless let us take his criteria as a convenient starting-point. The Leader of the Opposition is allowed a quota of life peers to be chosen from among members of the leader's own party or from such other persons as he or she may wish to patronise. There is no moral difference between accepting a peerage on Mr Harold Wilson's recommendation as Leader of the Opposition and accepting one on his recommendation as Prime Minister. Tawney's second criticism – that a Labour government should confer only 'essential' honours – is, howeyer, more solid.

Applying it, we find that Mr Wilson has created very few peers in the expectation that they would be in any way useful, except possibly to Mr Wilson personally. Moreover, those few peers who have been created with public utility in mind have turned out to be sad disappointments, both to Mr Wilson and to others. For instance, Lord Bowden (formerly Dr Vivian Bowden, and not to be confused with Lord Aylestone, who used to be Mr Herbert Bowden) was supposed to be part of the technological revolution; likewise Lord Snow; both were made ministers; and both soon retired from the political scene.

Lord Chalfont also was a disappointment, though for different reasons. As a minister he was probably slightly above par for the course. Certainly he always appeared highly pleased with himself. The trouble was that no one was quite sure which party – Labour, Liberal, even conceivably Conservative – he really supported. It is now manifest that he does not support Labour. Lord Chalfont, of course, could more accurately be described as a Wigg rather than a Wilson appointment. Lord Wigg formed a high opinion of his grasp of military affairs. He had a similarly high regard for Lord Brayley's command of these matters. Lord Brayley, true, was ennobled partly on account of services rendered – the precise nature of these services remains slightly mysterious – and therefore more properly belongs to a category which will be dealt with shortly. Nonetheless there was the idea, extraordinary as things turned out, that Brayley would be good for the Army. His peerage was opposed by the Political Honours Scrutiny Committee and by Lord Shackleton, the then Labour leader of the Lords. Still, it was confirmed. Mr Wilson cannot bear opposition in matters of this nature. And then Lord Brayley came an embarrassing cropper. It is needless to recount the painful details. Altogether Lord Wigg has an unhappy record as a tipster of House of Lords horseflesh.

The other peers created by Mr Wilson can conveniently be grouped as follows: those who are being rewarded for services rendered; those whose good will Mr Wilson is for various reasons anxious to secure or retain; assorted economists, the more wrong-headed the better; people who expect to be ennobled in the natural course of events, such as civil servants (Sir William Armstrong, Sir Burke Trend) and trade union leaders (Lord Briginshaw, who, on being criticised for accepting a title, remarked: 'It's not a title really, more a dignity'); together with numerous MPs of both parties who are clearly past it but can still do with the odd pound that comes their way in attendance allowances. About all that can be said in defence of Mr Wilson's choices in the last category is that he has been known to elevate personal enemies, even though they may be harmless enough, such as Lord Paget. Moreover, in the December list of life peerages there appeared the name of that adventurous soul, Mr Tom Driberg.

However, the most interesting and odd category is the first one: those who are being rewarded. They range from Lord, formerly Sir Rudy, Sternberg (services to import and export) through Lords Lovell-Davis and Lyons of Brighton (services to party publicity) to Lady Falkender (services various). Sir Joseph Kagan (services to mackintoshes) remains as I write a knight merely. Of this *galère* Lady Falkender's is probably the most deserving case. Lord Lovell-(formerly Mr Peter) Davis and Lord (formerly Mr Dennis) Lyons first attached themselves to Mr Wilson in 1964 in the company of Mr David Kingsley, the advertising man. They have stuck to him like barnacles ever since.

Lord Lyons was, as he presumably remains, the head of a PR concern. Lord Lovell-Davis describes himself as a journalist. Indeed, pipe firmly in mouth, he recently rebuked me in strong but polite terms for saying that his journalistic work was unknown to me. Lord Lovell-Davis gave me to understand that he was a director – it may have been the founder – of a features agency; and that, if not quite in the Northcliffe class, he was a person of consequence in the Street of Adventure. There was something, I seem to remember, about a coup in securing the exclusive rights to the life and times of Brigitte Bardot. Or, if it was not Miss Bardot, it was someone like her.

Mention of such matters brings us finally to the other interesting category: those whose good will Mr Wilson is anxious to secure or retain. For this group is dominated by the IPC-*Daily Mirror* connection with Lords Cudlipp, Jacobson, Ardwick and Castle well to the fore, not to mention Lady Birk (wife of Mr Ellis Birk, the group's solicitor-nark), to say nothing of Lord Ryder himself, and what a dreary fellow *he* is, to be sure; all, no doubt, to be joined in due time by Lords Miles, Lancaster, Robert-Edwards and Geoffrey-Goodman (to distinguish him from Arnold Goodman). A few of these characters are friends or at least acquaintances of mine; and my opinion of them in their ennobled state remains unchanged. Nevertheless there used to be a tradition that journalists did not accept honours from governments. It might be a good idea to revive the tradition.

But writers – full-time authors of books – are in different case. They are an oppressed and underpaid minority. Authors have always done badly out of the honours system; while musicians, sportsmen, and actors and actresses (more brainless, if that were possible, than sportsmen) have prospered. The system of life peerages is a form of literary patronage that lies ready to hand. It would be a surer source of income than PLR. Lords Amis and Wain? Baronesses Drabble, Forster and Brophy? The result could only be an improvement in Mr Wilson's House of Lords.

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Tom Baistow

Fleet Street, 1976

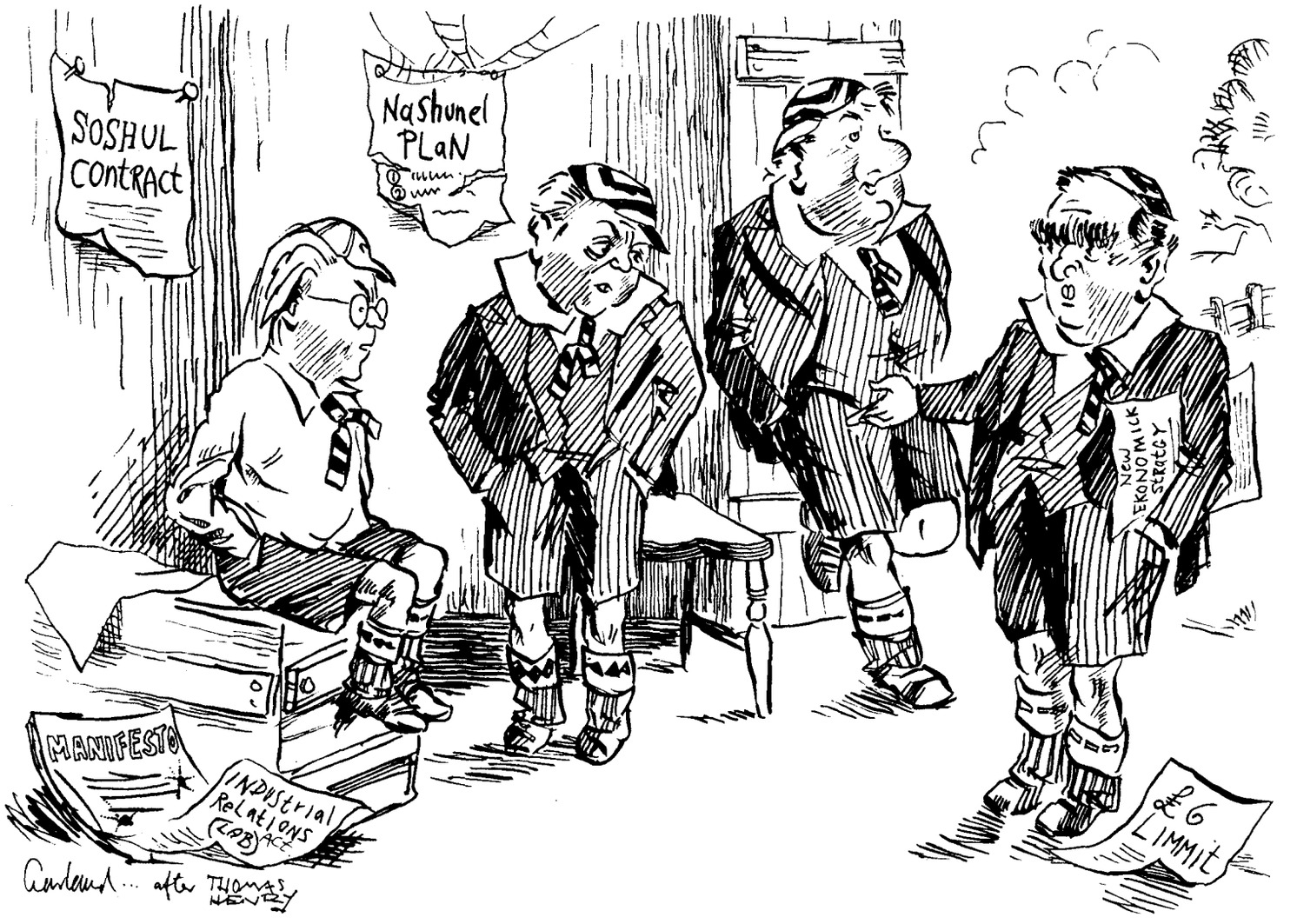
Whatever else they cover in 1976, the national newspapers will be devoting even more space to the continuing Fleet Street story. Last year they made the most – unashamedly slanted in favour of the Establishment point of view – of the 'threat to the freedom of the press', the Red herring drawn across the closed-shop issue by Lord Goodman in his capacity as chairman of the Newspaper Publishers' Association, and which should now be laid to rest by Michael Foot's proposed press charter. This year the nationals, and the Government, will have to face up to the real threat to the press, to its existence – its outdated economic structure.

Before the end of the month a three-man team from the Royal Commission on the press, set up three months ago at the Government's urgent request, will make an interim report on Fleet Street's immediate problems and ways to deal with them. As Lord Ryder pointed out cuttingly before he left his paper empire to tackle the problems of an even more ramshackle industry, the press already knows what its troubles are. What he might have conceded is that it is historically incapable of collectively putting its house in order: only government intervention is likely to be able to establish the conditions for that.

It would be ingenuous, however, to imagine that the Royal Commission's three wise men will come up with anything but vinegar-and-brown-paper remedies after such a brief journey into *terra incognita*. In the best British amateur tradition, there isn't one pro in the team: Professor O. R. McGregor, the commission's chairman and a sociologist, Lord Hunt of Everest fame, and Mr Roger Chorley, a chartered accountant. Even if, say, they recommend a government loan or grant to help the hardest-hit papers to ensure, in McGregor's words, that 'change where necessary is made in a socially acceptable way' – i.e. fund retraining or provide reasonable handshakes – it is hardly likely (one hopes) that Harold Wilson will do another Chrysler to keep his critics in business in the style to which they are accustomed, without a *quid pro quo*. (The NPA have already sounded out the EEC social fund about such a handout but the subvention mills of Brussels grind exceeding slow.)

A lot of money will be needed to compensate the unions for the massive and long-delayed shakeout of manpower that the owners hope to achieve by 1977. This on top of the (borrowed) millions already being spent on the very pricey new equipment needed to modernise (for example, the *Daily Express*, its sales still falling steadily, increased its borrowing last year to £10m. and arranged for a further £14m. in future credits). In fact talks with the unions to work out the terms of the new deal are stalled. As I forecast a year ago, the unions got the message in 1975 that the overmanning and restrictive practices jig was up, and they have moved towards a realistic attitude with a speed and an absence of serious disruption that has to be looked at in a world context to be appreciated. After all, Mrs Katharine Graham has produced her famous *Washington Post* with non-union labour following sabotage by striking printers; and one Paris daily is being printed in the provinces because a strike has shut down its own plant.

In November the leaders of the six main newspaper unions, including the journalists',



'We've gotter decide what good resolutions we're goin' to make this New Year's Day,' said Henry. 'The thing we choose doesn't last longer than the day, does it?' asked Ginger anxiously. 'No, it doesn't,' said William firmly, 'they try to make out it lasts all the year, but it jolly well doesn't.' – William the Pirate *by Richmal Crompton.*

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met to concert a common approach to the NPA on modernisation and declared, among other things, that they 'recognised that by the very nature of new technology rigid lines of demarcation are bound to be blurred'. Ostensibly a big leap forward; but it is easier for the non-craft unions that man the presses and dispatch side to welcome 'blurring' than for the typesetters to give up their elite status and the tight monopoly of techniques they have jealously guarded since they were a medieval guild. So, on second thoughts, their union, the National Graphical Association, declined to turn up – as did the photo-engravers and engineers – for last month's meeting with the publishers that was to have hammered out a new agreement on who would do what, and how many would do it.

Any agreement, said Mr Joe Wade, the NGA's assistant general secretary, could only be achieved 'at this stage anyway, on the basis of existing demarcation lines'. In other words, the NGA is determined that its members, having given up their linotype machines, must man all video terminal keyboards that replace them – thus partly negativing the technical revolution, for the idea is that journalists and advertising staff will type some copy straight into the photocomposition system, ready for the page.

Yet even when this snag has been overcome, as Mr Wade's 'at this stage' implies, the envisaged one-third cut in manning is of itself not the final answer to the press's crisis – it adds up to little over a 10-per-cent saving in overheads. It is a measure of the proprietors' myopia that they can't see beyond the new technology. Their faith in computerised electronics as the miracle cure for Fleet Street's endemic ills is a depressing reminder of the industry's failure to think out its basic problems: the effect of changing social habits and attitudes; the complex nature of the challenge to the survival of *national* newspapers as such, no matter how technically efficient; and the implications of continuing overdependence on an ever-diminishing pool of advertising.

The problems are international but the fact that Britain is the only Western country with truly national papers renders Fleet Street doubly vulnerable: its distribution costs are much higher than elsewhere and the competition for advertising is very much fiercer. A third and exacerbating factor is that British readers in the past were reared in a tradition of cheap newspapers that encouraged families to buy more than one – a habit that is dying fast. And a new factor whose impact will increase in relation to devolution is the growing demand for a real Scottish and Welsh national press. It all adds up to an outmoded set-up that belongs to the inter-war era of cheap trains and cheap communications, as anachronistic as the 'late news' formula rooted in the pre-car, pre-TV, pre-Newsak age when the only rivals were the BBC's dinner-jacket news bulletin and the weekly Pathé newsreel.

One doesn't need to be a mountaineer or wizard at double-entry book-keeping to read the entrails. Overall sales are shrinking steadily (the *Sun*'s spectacular gains have been at the others' expense). Each cover price rise is not only too late to meet soaring costs but accelerates the drop in circulation; and every increase in advertising rates reduces the volume so sharply that the value of the move is cancelled out. The brutal conclusion must be that this country can no longer sustain the range of mass-circulation national papers we still take for granted (*The Times*'s 315,000 sale would delight most pop papers abroad). Brutal not merely for the press but for the public and democracy itself: if the endemic crisis is allowed to drift into a circulation war such valuable but weak papers as the *Guardian* and the *Observer* could disappear.

The healthy alternative is easy to outline but it will take real political courage to bring about: a *wider* choice of dearer smaller-circulation papers with a greater diversity of appeal. The Royal Commission has already been inundated with the familiar prescriptions for the press's sickness – nationally owned presses for hire at fair rates, the naïve robbing-Peter-to-pay-Paul plan to redistribute revenue to the poorer papers, direct subsidies, complex newsprint schemes that would provide more jobs for bureaucrats than for newspapermen. But such ingenious cures simply treat the symptoms and ignore the root cause of the malady – the inherent instability of the advertising 'subsidy' which enables papers to sell at less than cost price.

Both Labour and Tories when in office have shied away from any 'interference' with the freedom of the press, declaring that papers must succeed or fail on a commercial basis. The point that politicians – and most newspapermen – fail to grasp is that the press operates on a 'commercial' basis which applies to no other industry. It is as if, say, British Leyland contracted to sell its cars at two thirds of cost price in return for a subsidy from oil sheikhs anxious to increase petrol consumption – a subsidy that might dwindle or disappear overnight in changing market conditions. Hardly surprisingly, no newspaper is going to go it alone, slashing its advertising and bumping up its price to the reader. The only way out is for the Government to lay down regulations restricting the proportion of their revenue that papers may derive from advertising, according to category – pop, quality, periodical etc. Unless the press's rickety economic structure is fundamentally rejigged no amount of electronic magic will save us from Cecil King's prediction of the three-paper state.

David Haworth

Not A Year for Europe

It was a broken-backed year for the European Community: it seems so distant now, but you will recall the neurotic anticipation of the referendum result which disrupted most of the EEC's business during the first part of the year. Since then there has been the equally neurotic examination by the other eight of Britain's performance as a confirmed Community member.

In so far as 1975 was, therefore, a 'British year' for the Common Market, the new year promises to put the same problem at the top of almost every agenda the Council of Ministers will be called upon to consider. While no one here expected Britain to be easily ingested after a decade of uncertainty and reluctance, the Government's reluctance to capitalise on the referendum endorsement came as a rude shock to our partners, all of whom are at a loss to understand why Britain continues to be such a grudging Community member.

Of course, British spokesmen and ministers will deny this: are we not pledged to play our full part in Community affairs, do our bit, work for the EEC's common good, etc.? Yes, Harold Wilson is on record to that effect, or something approximating to it. And when James Callaghan recently emerged from a Council of Foreign Ministers to announce he had 'a very great complaint against the lot of you', he was mercifully addressing not his Continental ministerial colleagues but the Brussels press corps – who, he maintains, are incorrigibly biased against his every move and utterance.

Yet there is no evident perception on his part that it is futile to boast of mortgaged North Sea wealth we don't so far possess or that Britain is in some undefined way different – and, by implication, better – than her partners on a whole range of issues from direct elections to beef subsidies. Not understanding a word his EEC colleagues might say to him in their own language, his instinct is to produce the admonitory finger, lapse into that mateyness that may have caused the TUC to eat its resolutions but sounds strident and defensive in the EEC.

Through no fault of his own, however, Callaghan's cue to step into the limelight came during the most fierce economic storm of the Community's existence. With 5 million now unemployed and an unprecedented 2.5 per cent drop in the EEC's gross domestic product, he is by no means the only little Lear on stage. As elections are coming up in Germany this year, one safe prediction is that Chancellor Schmidt will out-bellow every other Community leader on the evils of inflation and the supposed excessive bureaucracy of Brussels.

The fact is that, though the EEC held together last year, it showed unmistakable signs of disintegration. While this is not the reason for Callaghan's grudging acceptance of the Community, it does help explain his ambivalence. Different inflation rates in the Nine have sharpened the conflict between national and Community economic policies, just as they have blurred views about the 'right' economic and social policies that should be pursued by the Community as a whole.

The EEC's 'successes' are increasingly to be found, therefore, in the margin labelled political cooperation which is, incidentally, the only aspect of intra-Community deal-

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ings which has won Callaghan's unhesitant praise. Thus the EEC showed a 'European identity' at the UN seventh special session of the General Assembly and at its 30th session. The final act of the Helsinki conference was signed by an Italian minister on behalf of the Nine and the EEC concerted its policy on Spain. Also a single European delegation was involved in the so-called Euro-Arab dialogue in a joint Community political enterprise.

While these are symbolically attractive exercises in just the same way that the proposed Euro-passport will be, they cost nothing. But watch the Nine's reactions to the report on European Union by the Belgian premier Leo Tindemans which is to be published later this month, or note the hostility to any suggestions that the Nine should at last act on the declared ambition to achieve economic and monetary union – and every reason, good and bad, against them will be brought into play.

The most starry-eyed supporter of the EEC (a recent survey showed that, with the exception of Denmark, these are more numerous than ever) would agree on the need to escape the post-war mood of utilitarianism in which the Rome Treaty was signed. Germany is respectable again, times are hard and getting harder; but to lose sight of the essentially simple vision which informed the Community's creation is to forget what the EEC is for.

To make the point one of the EEC's founders, Walter Hallstein, has quoted what one of the last publications of the old League of Nations had to say about a customs union:

> In order to create a customs union it is essential to allow free trade within the area. For a customs union to become a reality it is essential to allow the free movement of people in the area. If a customs union is to have any substance it is important to have free currency exchange and fixed rates of exchange within the union. This means, among other things, that there must be a free transfer of capital within the union. If, however, there is a free traffic in goods, people and capital in the area it is not possible for the countries involved to pursue different economic policies to maintain their economic system.

By this definition, except the free movement of people, the European Community fails on every count – and the EEC has always aspired to a greater destiny than a mere customs union. Give or take an extensive list of monetary compensatory amounts by which agricultural trade is adjusted, and there is a customs union in farm produce. But there is precious little else.

The drama of thrice-yearly EEC summits gives a spurious impression of progress, but in fact does little more than dynamite log jams which have accumulated during the preceding months. In Dublin it was New Zealand cheese, in Rome Britain's claim to have a separate seat at the North-South dialogue. In Luxembourg this spring the issue will be whether or not the Community is to have a common energy policy – a question with which the Nine have been wrestling for the past two years. All of these could have been settled further down the hierarchy, and sooner, but the magic of Summitry is its own reward for those who indulge in it.

Donald Gould

Doctors at War

Nobody needed the prescience of an Old Moore to foresee that 1975 was going to be a rough year for the NHS. Doctors, dentists, nurses, administrators, tea ladies, Secretaries of State, and everybody else concerned had long been demonstrating the kind of tetchiness which must result from an attempt to meet an infinite demand from finite resources. Inflation and an empty national purse were bound to make things worse. Certainly NHS expenditure rose in 1974/75 to a record 5.4 per cent of the GNP, but out of the extra £750m. provided, £700m. went on higher wages for nurses, chiropodists, porters, and the rest of the 'other ranks'. In April the doctors got a 30 per cent rise, putting them back on a par with other professionals. There was nothing left for other things.

Most of the trouble occurred in the hospitals. At the beginning of the year the consultants were already thoroughly unsettled. For some time past they had found themselves attempting to cope with an ever-increasing work load using ever less adequate resources, and for no extra pay. Old buildings, lack of money for new equipment, and the strain of having to rely upon the help of sometimes incompetent overseas-trained assistants – all added to their worries and frustrations. They felt themselves exploited, and wanted a new contract which could somehow limit the amount of work they could be asked to do. They were offered one just before Christmas 1974. They didn't like it. The terms were designed to make full-time service within the NHS more attractive by adding a 20 per cent 'full commitment' bonus to a consultant's salary; by introducing 'overtime' pay for the first time, but giving full-timers first refusal of the 'overtime' work available; and by abolishing the current system of merit awards (which can add £8,000 a year to a top consultant's salary), using the money instead for seniority payments to be reserved exclusively for full-time employees.

This was widely interpreted as an attempt to force a full-time salaried service on the profession by more than matching the extra income earned from private practice by the 45 per cent of the country's 11,000 consultants who opt to work a notional 4½ instead of a full time (and equally notional) 5½ day week, and who are paid nine elevenths of the full-time salary.

The consultants claimed that their discontent had nothing to do with money. Average earnings from private practice are £3,000 a year – not a great deal more than the portion of full-time salary sacrificed (plus the real but rarely mentioned advantage of a schedule D tax assessment). They insisted that their true concern was for the right to spend their own time practising medicine in their own way, free from state control or interference. A relatively few militants, backed, as ever, by the strident voice of the BMA, persuaded their already resentful fellows that the new proposals were deliberately designed to make them all vassals of the state. With the New Year a patchy but disruptive campaign of working-to-contract began. Hospital admissions slowed down and out-patient clinics closed.

The President of the Royal College of Surgeons, Sir Rodney Smith, breached a tradition whereby the royal colleges refrain from public pronouncements on medico-political affairs, and told Mrs Castle that morale among doctors was declining.

However, this first industrial action of the year was not a great success. Dr David Owen, the Health Minister, has admitted that the consultants could have caused his Department and the public grave embarrassment had they been wholehearted and united in their 'work-to-contract'. But they were not. Many refused to join in the action from the start, and others soon faltered. Nevertheless, the dispute dragged on, producing more irritation than effective pres-

Roger Woddis

Sex Act

(Acknowledgments to Southey's 'After Blenheim')

It was a Monday morning,
  Old Porker's face was red;
The Sex Discrimination Act
  'Had reared its ugly head,
And darkening a dismal day,
The cows demanded Equal Pay.

He saw – and much to his disgust –
  A woman passing by,
Who stepped into El Vino's bar
  And didn't wear a tie.
Old Porker snorted: 'Tis, I fear,
The end of all we hold most dear.'

'Now tell me how it came about,'
  His little grandchild cried,
Who knew, despite her tender years,
  The law was on her side.
'Why do you grunt at Lady Howe?
Is Betty Lockwood such a sow?'

'There was a time,' Old Porker said,
  'When Mum was less than Dad,
But what with this and Women's Lib,
  I think they've all gone mad.
I may have been a swine before,
But now I'm just a bloody boar.

'No good will come of it, my dear,
  Although the battle's won.'
His grandchild gave a secret smile:
  'I think it's just begun;
And pigs will still be pigs,' said she,
'After this famous victory.'

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sure, and in mid-March the vociferous leaders of the Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association (representing just under half of all NHS consultants) attempted to raise the temperature again by threatening to force the closure of casualty departments, hospital wards, and, 'if the Government still does not get the message', whole hospitals, unless immediate steps were taken 'to provide proper services' (including seeing the consultants 'all right'). This was too much even for the BMA, which decided not to support the move on the grounds that it would alienate public feeling.

A month later BMA negotiators had an all-night meeting with Mrs Castle, during which she stated her willingness to revise details of the existing contracts (but not to alter the new) in favour of part-timers, and the association thereupon advised consultants to resume normal work. Thus the strike that never really was finally petered out and a kind of peace was restored. But not for long.

In July the junior hospital doctors began to kick against the pricks. The term 'junior' is ineptly applied to all doctors below the rank of consultant working in NHS hospitals, ranging from the newly qualified to experienced specialists, aged perhaps 35 or 40. For some years they had justifiably complained about the hours they are required to work. In 1971 overtime money became payable to juniors working more than 80 hours a week, and these payments have been worth between £1,500 and £2,500 to those involved. In response to the demand for a better deal the Government offered new contracts which would entitle juniors to overtime pay after 56 hours, but only at about one third of normal rates – a proposal that might be expected to raise the eyebrows of workers in some other trades. Moreover, the Government's wage restraint rules meant that the total paid out for overtime could not be increased. Therefore the new awards could only be made at the expense of those juniors at the top of the league who were already doing well (financially, at least) by working 100 or even 150 hours a week on the job and on call. They would have to make do with less – in some cases a lot less – and accept the novel principle that the longer you work, the less you get paid.

This tortuous scheme (of which the above is a much oversimplified account) appeared grossly inequitable even to the majority of the junior hospital doctors who could not really grasp what it was all about. They were not appeased when, in September, the BMA uncharacteristically welcomed the 'solution', saying that 'in the circumstances it seems a very fair way of dealing with the problem'. So they, too, following their seniors' example, threatened industrial action, saying they would deal with emergencies only. In an attempt to soothe their anger the Department of Health said in October that the juniors could retain their old conditions of service until some new agreement could be reached. It was not enough. Many consultants found themselves 'covering' at nights and weekends for their absent assistants, and ambulance drivers found themselves touting acutely ill patients from hospital to hospital in the hope of finding one that would accept their load.

In mid-December Mrs Castle agreed to an independent audit of the money available for overtime payments in case previous calculations had been wrong, and in case there might, after all, be enough cash in the kitty to make everybody happy. The juniors remained suspicious, and at the year's end those who felt able were still 'on strike'.

Meanwhile the Queen's Speech confirmed the Government's intentions to rid NHS hospitals of pay-beds as soon as possible, and to control private practice outside the NHS. This brought the consultants to the boil once again. At the end of November, and at the BMA's behest, they (or some of them) also renewed industrial action, and, like their juniors, decided to deal with emergencies only. The more intransigent among them are still protesting in this manner, despite a promise that the phasing out of pay-beds will be managed by an independent committee, empowered to take account of the alternative local facilities for private patients before closing NHS beds.

So it has been a sad year, marked by profitless disputes, in which nobody has been the winner. The squabbles over money are patently only the symptoms of a deeper discontent. In her Nye Bevan Memorial Lecture, delivered on 3 December, Mrs Castle said:

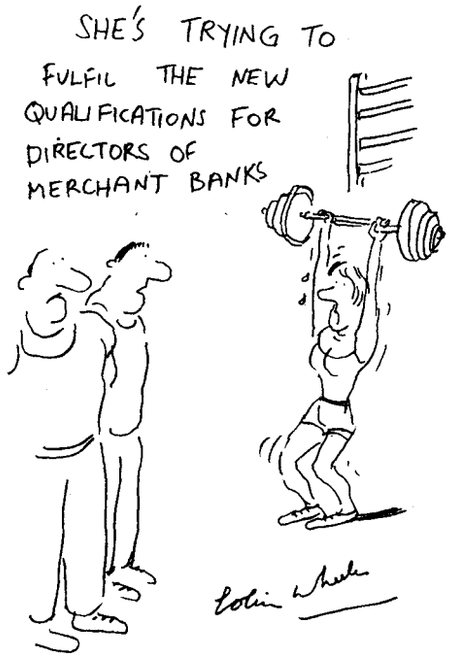
> If the NHS is to be strengthened we must find a way of entering into a new, less bitter dialogue between the medical profession and government. For if the suspicions and resentments could only be broken down the medical profession would find it could play a great constructive part with government in getting even better value for money in the NHS and making our resources go further in planning the best use of our medical manpower, helping to design more cost effective buildings, working out the right health priorities on which to concentrate, reconciling clinical judgments with economic restrictions, not as civil servants, whole-time conscripts or state slaves, but as free men fulfilling the ethic by which they seek to live.

These are brave sentiments, with which many doctors would wholeheartedly agree, but if they are to be translated into deeds, both sides have a long, hard slog ahead in 1976.

Fred Halliday

Imperialism's Last Stand?

In the last few months, announcements have been appearing in the British press stating that the Sultan of Oman wants ex-British pilots for three-year periods of service with his air force. Starting pay is £8,200 per annum, with generous side benefits. It is curious that the Sultan should be attracting combat pilots for three years (with possible renewals after that) since he has always predicted that the war against the People's Front guerillas in the province of Dhofar would be over by the end of 1975, and there are already several thousand Iranian counter-insurgency forces, including helicopter gunships, operating in the war zone. His offer of £8,200 a year tax-free is also in sharp contrast to the fact that he has seriously overspent Oman's limited oil revenues and was forced to borrow $100m. from Saudi Arabia last summer. In contrast, the average pay for those Omanis lucky enough to find work as unskilled labourers on construction projects, such as those of George Wimpey and Co., is under £2 a day.



Despite five years of anti-guerilla campaigns following on the Sultan's accession to power with British help in 1970 and despite a recent victory claim, the Omani Government has so far failed to eliminate the guerrillas, who are now concentrated in the western part of Dhofar, near the South Yemen border. The British connection is the key to the Sultan's survival. Officially the British admit to only 600 military personnel in Oman; but there are, in fact, over 2,000 – some working as combat officers and pilots, some as training operatives, and some as servicing and communications experts at the two RAF bases of Salala (in Dhofar) and Masira. A key branch of the British apparatus is made up of the estimate of 100 members of the Special Air Services (SAS), a counter-insurgency unit used on behind-the-lines missions and on training local forces.

Dhofar is, in the words of one British officer, 'the last place in the world where an Englishman is still called *'sahib'*. The British military presence provides the command and technical backbone for the whole of the Sultan's army apparatus and, as with the American operation in Laos, its importance is understated by the figures alone. For this reason the war bears an unmistakable British stamp, recalling and drawing on the lessons of previous campaigns. One

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need only recall the now mythologised colonial wars of the 19th century – against the Mahdi in the Sudan, the Boxers in China, the Afghans, the Zulus, the Irish, as well as more recent counter-insurgency operations such as the wars in Malaya (1948-60), Kenya (1953-59), Cyprus (1955-59) and Aden (1963-67).

Dhofar offers an ideal setting for counter-insurgency operations: not only are there no troublesome observers there to report British actions (no journalists and no white missionaries either), but the combat area is relatively small (10,00 square miles), the population limited to under 200,000 and the guerrilla supply-lines with South Yemen run through mountains that are less than 20 miles wide. Compared to Algeria, Vietnam or Malaya, it is a simpler *military* operation.

Many of the tactics being used in Oman are derived from the experience of the previous campaigns. For example, in Kenya the British used a tactic known as 'counter-gangs', groups of deserters drawn from the nationalist guerrillas, and from tribal elements, who were organised into squads of irregulars. Under British Army guidance, they were used for intelligence gathering and then for combat operations. The man who pioneered this tactic was a young army officer named Frank Kitson, now best-known as the author of *Low Intensity Operations*.

In Oman the counter-gang policy has been developed by the SAS training team since 1970 and over 1,500 Dhofaris have been organised in *firquat* squads run on tribal lines with names like *Saladin Firqua* and *Nasser Firqua*. They have been used in counter-guerrilla actions and have established themselves in the eastern part of Dhofar where, according to British reports, a situation of anarchy now prevails as the tribal armed groups monopolise power and operate protection rackets around the wells there. Whereas the People's Front has campaigned to eliminate tribal differences, the British are actively reviving them.

Another classic counter-insurgency policy being used in Oman is what British writers politely refer to as 'food control', which is related to another euphemistic 'population control'. They are more accurately called starvation and forced resettlement. These tactics go back at least as far as the Boer War (when 20,000 Boers died of starvation in concentration camps), and were used in the Malayan war, when over half-a-million peasants were driven into 'new villages', the prototypes of the 'strategic hamlets' built by the Americans in Vietnam.

In Dhofar a British building firm, Sir William Halcrow, have constructed nine resettlement centres as part of an £8m. counter-insurgency project, and the mountain population is being forced to concentrate in these or in newly built centres around the capital, Salala. Barbed-wire fences have been built around these areas, and checkpoints prevent any of the inhabitants from taking food out of the government-controlled centres. The policy here is both to starve the guerrillas out and to force the population to come under government control – draining the water from the fish as it is usually called.

But this resettlement programme is backed up by a more destructive policy, that of systematic bombardment of the guerrilla-held areas by the Sultan's air force, navy and artillery detachments. All animals and crops outside government areas are attacked, as are wells and mountain paths used by the inhabitants. The population is, therefore, faced with a choice – either to starve, get shelled to death, or to take refuge in government centres.

Despite the drawbacks experienced by America in Vietnam, air power remains a key weapon in the Dhofar counter-insurgency campaign. In addition to its use in terrorising and attacking the liberated areas, it has two other functions. First, it is the main means of intelligence gathering on guerrilla units and supplies. Secondly, it is used to increase the mobility of government forces: in February 1975 the Sultan's forces, with British and Iranian backing, launched an offensive against the Kamarr region north-west of Salala in which helicopter-borne troops were used extensively for the first time. Ex-RAF pilots who answer the Sultans adverts will have plenty to do.

Nor, of course, has one of the permanent features of all counter-insurgency campaigns, namely psychological warfare, been neglected. In essence this falls into two general categories – the sweet and the sour, or 'hearts and minds' and 'deterrence'. Among the 'sweet' policies one can include the development of health and education facilities in government-held areas, and the offering of financial rewards to those guerrillas who desert with information and weapons. Prices have been put on the heads of the leading People's Front cadres. On the sour side, the Sultan makes use of his increased fire power to threaten all who resist with starvation and death. Leaflets dropped over the guerrilla-held areas sometimes have a picture of a grave with the inscription: 'Atheist rebel, this will soon be yours.'

Ironically there have been disputes between the British and Iranian officers in Oman about what kind of counter-insurgency tactics to use. The Iranians claim that the British do not want to bring the war to an end, because of the excellent training offered by the Dhofar war. The British accuse the Iranians of relying too much on 'American', Vietnam-style tactics, of using firepower too much and of being reluctant to chase after guerrillas on the ground.

With the war now in its eleventh year there is no sign that the British, the Iranians or any of the other nations involved are willing to cease intervening in Omani affairs. Since Sultan Qabus met Ford and Kissinger in Washington a year ago the US has also indicated its interest in establishing military facilities in the country, a desire that can only have been increased by the pending loss of the communications base at Asmara in Ethiopia and the naval base at Al Jufair in Bahrain. Since the US was driven out of Indochina, and the Portuguese decided to quit Africa, Oman remains the only classical colonial war being fought anywhere in the world. The Sultan, with his pilots on their three-year contracts, no doubt feels he is going to continue needing his foreign support for several years to come.

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Profile: Ian Trethowan

A Man Born to Manage

One of the regular accusations made against the BBC is that it is staffed by spoilt, over-privileged left-wingers educated (at the taxpayer's expense) at Oxford or Cambridge. Nothing could be less true, or more unjust. Of all our major institutions, the BBC is the one chiefly manned by moral-minded grammar-school boys. Many – in the tradition of the father of them all, John Reith – may have been at heart eccentric, wild men. But they have almost all been local boys made good, *not* born within a mile of Hampstead, but in the provinces. The latest of the line is Ian Trethowan, who this year takes on the most influential job of all – Managing Director of Television.

It is somehow symbolic of the man that he should be assuming a role which has such a grey-flannel-suit title. Or perhaps, better, pin-stripe-suited. He is self-made, in the terms of the BBC hierarchy; recognisably so, but of a different, new kind. He is also adopting his position at a moment when the future of the BBC is as uncertain as that of the country. So, given the uncertainty, the powers that be have chosen a Baldwin.

Ian Trethowan was born in High Wycombe in 1922. He looks a great deal younger than his years; not just well-built and fit, but with that indefinable air of a man who (for all that he is in his fifties) has a certainty of a long future. He was, as he would be the first to admit, a typical child of the depressed middle class of the immediate post Great War era. His father never entirely recovered from the war, and was ill-at-ease and generally dissatisfied with the job he then found, as a clerk in a City firm. (His mother was different. She came from what Trethowan himself describes as 'a proper large Cockney family', she was a cheerful character.) Trethowan senior, despite keeping his army connections till the end of his life, mainly through various welfare organisations, only found his most satisfactory role quite late on. He got a part-time job as a sporting journalist; a Saturday job which he enjoyed and which helped, too, to support the household. This small but important pleasure was one of the main influences on his young son's life.

In the tradition of his class, Ian, at 11, won a scholarship boy's place at Christ's Hospital. He remembers two aspects most happily. One was a famous (to his pupils, absolutely unforgettable) history master called Teddy Edwards, whose most gratefully remembered lesson was that he 'taught you how to use a library'. The second was a musical tradition (carried on to this day by Bernard Levin, among others). That teacher was a nephew of Archbishop Lang; and in a sense, he taught his pupils how to use a library, too.

The young Trethowan did not, though, go on to university. At first sight, it seems strange – although it is also true of many major figures in the BBC. He has a graceful way of explaining it. 'The reason really was that it was quite clear, early on, that I wasn't ever going to be clever enough to get a scholarship.' His headmaster disagreed and disapproved, but accepted the fact that Trethowan's parents could not possibly afford to send him on to Oxford or Cambridge on any other basis. He also accepted, with a certain disdain, that the boy had decided – again, under his father's influence – that he wanted to become a journalist.

There was a curious conflict in Trethowan's early life between romantic and puritan influences. A sense of correct behaviour, in a strictly military sense, was early instilled. (To this day, he is a loyal and respected member of the Anglican church; the reasons seem to have mainly to do with duty and respectability.) But, as a teenager, the romantic element that his father had dearly fostered mattered most. So Trethowan left school at the age of 16, in 1938, to take a job as a copy boy for £1 a week on the *Daily Sketch*. He still remembers the great journalists of the time, such as L. V. Manning and Sidney Caroll; figures of cinematic glamour, the prototypes of those men in mackintoshes and slouch hats with a mission to reform small-town society.

But in 1939 he was taken away (evacuated, with his father, to Norwich) and became a sports reporter on the *Eastern Daily Press*. A year later, they moved to Yorkshire; he spent a few months on the *Yorkshire Post*, until he was old enough to be conscripted into the navy. That lasted four and a half years. In the latter part of the war, he joined the Fleet Air Arm and was supposed to learn to become a pilot. Like many of his contemporaries (John Stonehouse was one) he was sent as a talented young man to the United States. There, he made a bloomer to which he admits with a certain engaging candour. While training, he crashed a plane (which happens to most people). But he happened to drop his plane directly on top of the car in which his commanding officer was driving at the time. The CO survived to tell the tale; and part of what he said was to suggest to Trethowan that he would never be much good as a pilot. His obvious role in life (said the CO) was as an observer.

That was how he finished the war years: and it was advice he never forgot. He thought about it when he was demobbed in early 1946, and went back to work for the *Yorkshire Post* in their London offices. He was taken on as a sports reporter, again, but within a year he was industrial correspondent. Within a few more months, he moved on to write about Parliament from the gallery. By 1948, he was trying on what turned out to be his most long-lasting and successful pair of shoes, as lobby correspondent.

He was a respected, if not especially distinguished, member of that group until 1955, when he joined the staff of the *News Chronicle*. It was at this point, almost exactly 20 years ago, that the career of the new, the perhaps alarming, Trethowan as we now know him, began in earnest. The days of sport were over, except for weekends; so was the romanticism, the hopes maybe of being a pilot. He began to turn into the man he is seen as today – some might say cold-hearted, some might say calculating. All would agree that he was determinedly on the path to power.

At the end of 1958, when Michael Curtis resigned as editor of the *News Chronicle*, Trethowan left with him. He already knew that Geoffrey Cox would ask him to join Independent Television News, even though he had 'never appeared on television – or maybe once'. The job was deputy editor, comparable to that of a managing or night editor on a newspaper, and not (in its less grand way) dissimilar to the kind of job he is about to take over. He feels he learned a lot from it, that it taught him the 'practicalities' of media operations, and that they chiefly consist of knowing 'what you can get people to do'. He now, of course, has 7,000 people to get to do things for him.

Nonetheless, in 1960, the romantic, theatrical side of his nature reappeared when (with some uncertainty) he decided to do a series of BBC documentaries in America – *Main Street USA*. By today's standards, they were not particularly original, but at the time they were a gamble. And it worked. What is more, the team managed to produce six programmes in six weeks. It is another experience he looks back to with some pride and delight. It is also a possible portent for the people who will work for him, given the time and trouble it now takes to make documentaries – and the expense.

It was around this time, in the early Sixties, that Trethowan instituted what he still regards as a classic answer to the perennial problem of how to produce political programmes. It was called *Westminster at Work*: it was the first of its kind, and it was, frankly, dull. He was still a backroom boy, though not entirely willingly: when Richard Dimbleby died, he dearly wanted the position Robin Day finally got, as presenter of *Panorama*. It was, at the same time, both the most respected and the most flashy place to be. But, having lost, he settled for a less glamorous life; his eyes were set on the future more firmly than ever.

He continued to regard himself as a particular kind of political journalist. The discipline in which he had grown up was one which he would regard as impartiality, strictly analytical, and largely anonymous. Of all the papers and programmes to which he has contributed, the *Economist* was the most long-lasting and, at least for a while, the most prestigious. He began in the Fifties under Geoffrey Crowther to write a Westminster column; in an odd way, for a man so determined and so certain of his own talent for spotting the truth, he never seems to have objected to his copy being changed to fit the *Economist*'s line. And Crowther himself was another important influence, an intellectual disciplinarian of the type Trethowan admires and, one suspects, hopes to become.

Until his official instatement as Managing

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Director of Radio in 1968 (he had been working *in petto* for a year before, under Frank Gillard) Trethowan spent two years as a political columnist on *The Times*. His articles, nowadays, read as surprisingly banal; respectable and – by present standards – non-committal. But they earned him a reputation which he has never lost, as a man of the Right.

Certainly, his most influential friends are to be found there. It is, he says, a *canard* that Edward Heath is godfather to one of his small daughters; it is perfectly true, though, that Mr Heath is a close friend of his, and that so are many Conservative politicians. When he was writing his *Times* columns, it was during the nadir of the then Wilson Administration, and he did not hesitate to show his contempt: writing, for instance, in December 1967:

> If Mr Wilson can do the job, well and good. If not, they [the Labour Party] are not likely to have less compunction than even a month ago about trying to find somebody else who can. Whether they could do it, and how, is another matter . . .

And three weeks later, in January 1968, he was firmly (to the extent that he ever speaks out openly) pushing Roy Jenkins as Labour's best hope.

It was at this time that the alliance was formed which has had such a lasting (and some would say damaging) effect on the BBC: the Charles Hill/Trethowan axis. The radio doctor seems to have thought that Trethowan would provide the best medicine for a corporation which seemed to have something nasty, perhaps dangerously, wrong with its insides. Like Trethowan, he was not a company man in the old-fashioned BBC sense; he had worked with equal enthusiasm for both sides. But Trethowan and he believed that the time was coming to play safe.

The effect of Trethowan's appointment to radio may not have been entirely what Lord Hill had in mind. Trethowan was lucky, because he happened to preside over a time during which radio was expanding anyway; partly due to kids with their transistors preferring it to boring old television; partly to do with the growth of local radio. That in particular has always been a subject close to his heart, as it was to his former boss, Frank Gillard; he embraced the BBC plans laid down in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*: it is known around the buildings that the actual writing was done by his close colleague (and rival) Gerald Mansell, now running the external services from an office in Bush House considerably larger, in floor space, than Trethowan's own.

Trethowan is chiefly remembered, as people look back over his years in radio, for two qualities. One was a tendency (thought by many to be wrong, and outside the BBC's private rules) to intervene directly in programmes. Of course, being the kind of man he is, with his particular interests and his strong (though affably expressed) views on news, it was in the current affairs department that his presence made itself most felt. Literally felt; Trethowan is not a man who uses minions to do the tougher part of his job. He lives by his own unshakeable sense of responsibility; if someone is to be fired, he does it quickly, and in person.

His views on the presentation of news – one of his less friendly colleagues describes it as 'boringness writ large' – have put him at odds with the journalists in the BBC who hold the opposite view, in particular with private, dramatic enclaves like the *World at One*, to whom his last bequest has been a new editor after his own heart. But even the people who have quarrelled most bitterly with him, and spent a great deal of effort preventing what they regarded as uncalled-for interference, respect him as a manager. It is surprising how many of them repeat, with emphasis, not only that his great talent is managerial, but that this may well be his real qualification for his new job at the Television Centre.

This will, in many ways, be the opposite of his time in radio. He will be presiding over a period of contraction rather than expansion; a fact he recognises and plans for: his main business will be to keep morale high, in those enormous offices full of bright young people who recently assumed, as of right, that they were working in a growth industry. He will also have to cope with bright young people who were allowed their heads in fields where he is not an expert; particularly in the new culture of documentary drama series. It is said, with some authority, that he believes *Days of Hope* should never have been broadcast. Or, at least, that he personally would find it difficult to justify because it was so 'political' – a phrase always used by nature's conservatives to describe anything remotely socialist. But he will begin as ever, by playing the cards close to his chest.

That may, though, be the wrong gambling metaphor to use about Ian Trethowan. The passion of his life is horses; if he were rich, he would buy one. It shows in his office, beautifully decorated with most elegant prints of great racers; it shows in the way he spends his Saturdays, at courses; it shows in his language. His metaphors are all from the turf: 'Like Newmarket Heath', for instance, or 'first past the post'; or 'well behaved in the paddock'. Trethowan will be well-behaved. He must, after all, want – as any good horse-lover would – to become a knight.

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London Diary

☐ The big shift in 1975, a watershed year in many ways, is that for the first time the Soviet Union edged ahead of the United States in both military power and diplomatic influence. This of course is one reason for the increasingly alarmist note of geopolitical comment from Peking, who now fear the Russians much more than they ever feared the West. The Russians have had a very successful year in the UN, where they command a large and regular majority of the type the US enjoyed in the 1950s. They have achieved near-parity of amphibious forces with the US and, thanks to the workings of the American constitution, a much greater freedom in deploying them. Hence they can impose an unpopular government on Angola, well beyond their traditional sphere of influence, without the American government being permitted to make a response. 1976 should see their breakout into the Indian Ocean, where Mrs Gandhi waits with open arms to receive them. The past year has been a bad one for Kissinger, with his laborious détente policy in contemptible ruins; a good one for Daniel Moynihan, much hated in the State Department, whose habit of calling things by their true names has been wholly vindicated by events. 1976 is going to see America paralysed by election politics, and with a horrible Hobson's choice between three daunting misfits – the aging jellyfish Humphrey, the unspeakable Reagan, or four more years of infructuous Ford. Come back Jack Kennedy, harem and all!

☐ In domestic politics the important shift in 1975 has been in the public's attitude to a general election. Last January, after the exhausting twin elections of 1974, no politician in his senses would have urged another. Public hostility to electioneering (reinforced by the tedious referendum campaign) has been the great strength of the Harold Wilson government. But in January 1976 I can sniff a different breeze. The Government's unpopularity is such that people are beginning to feel that even another election is preferable to its continuance in office. This will bring about a momentous change in the tactics of the Tories, who are passing over to the offensive; and, perhaps equally important, in the attitude of the Scotnats. They now stand higher than Labour in the Scottish polls, and must surely calculate that an election in 1976 would be their long-awaited opportunity to emerge as the largest parliamentary group in Scotland. In that case, why risk letting slip their chance by keeping Labour in power? The Liberals (wrongly in my view) believe they could pick up seats in a Labour débâcle. Granted the impending by-elections, growing restlessness on both extreme wings of the PLP, and a Tory inclination to modify Ulster bi-partisanship in a pro-Unionist direction, I can see the makings of a government defeat on a major vote.

☐ A number of senior ministers outside the cabinet (the most restless section of the Government at present) share this view that Wilson is heading for a disaster on the Commons floor, and are urging him to do something about it. In particular, they want the Government to drop a number of highly unpopular Bills, arguing that some legislation will have to go as the timetable is unworkable. The obvious candidates are the docks Bill, on which Scotnats, Liberals and Ulsterites all say they will vote with the Opposition and which is also much disliked by many trade union sponsored MPs, and the promise of restoration of the 'press-gag' legislation vetoed by the Lords. But both are dear to the heart of Michael Foot, and it is difficult to imagine that either could be dropped without entailing his resignation. To which argument the save-the-ship ministers reply: So what? He has made himself hated by everyone except a few trade union bosses like Jack Jones. This may be so, but the counter-arguments are also powerful. Might not Foot's departure mark the end of union support for the £6 limit, just at the moment when the engineers have at last accepted it? And would he not be accompanied by Tony Benn, unhappy at Energy and infuriated by the Chrysler muddle, followed by a general erosion of left-wing support for the Government? Yes, very likely. I do not envy Harold Wilson his New Year cogitations.

☐ My end-of-the year treats have included a copy of Louis d'Antin van Rooten's: *Mots d'Neures: Cousses, Rames,* given me for Christmas by Tom Stoppard. I had meant to get this book, which first came out in 1967, for some time. As its title implies, it is a wickedly ingenious attempt to translate *Mother Goose's Rhymes* into the nearest equivalent in French words, accompanied by a learned commentary on what the resultant French actually means. Thus, for 'Rain, rain, go away', we get:

> Reine, reine, gueux éveille.
> Gomme à gaine, en horreur, taie.

Which is rendered as:

> Queen, Queen, arouse the rabble
> Who use their girdles, horrors, as pillow slips.

Strongly recommended to all NS competition addicts who are not yet familiar with it.

☐ I took my four-year-old nephew on an end-of-year walk through the spinney which leads down from the back of our village to the river. This is a good route: plenty of dense undergrowth, huge trees, some of which are hollow, a dark and beautiful river, no people at all, a jungly atmosphere and a faint air of menace. It ends in a weir which Philip Hope-Wallace calls the perfect backdrop for *Rosmersholm.* I promised my nephew the possibility of cannibals and the certainty of wild creatures, so he brought along his new sword just in case. In the event, we didn't do badly. We stampeded two rabbits, watched a squirrel, saw what might have been a pike, and put up our local pair of wild ducks, whose appearance is always reliable. Then suddenly, through the trees in the field beyond, we saw loping along a grey-brown creature which might have been a very large dog. It stopped and considered us carefully, with what looked distinctly like a wolfish expression. I was glad my companion had brought his sword, which was rather too big for him and had a real steel blade: a useful weapon. Perhaps for this reason, the creature decided to resume its loping and made off through the woods. What was it? A stray Alsatian on the rampage? Or can it be, in this age of horrific marvels, when killer-sharks thrill hundreds of millions, monsters are officially protected in Scotch lochs, and terrorists stalk the earth, can it be that wolves are returning to the Green Belt?

☐ As it happens, by the time you read this I shall be in the Loch Ness country, and will see what is thought of the latest discoveries by the good folk up there. No doubt they will be delighted, since 1976 promises to be the best summer for Nessie-hunting ever recorded. I appreciate that Sir Peter Scott's chief motive in throwing his weight behind the idea of a scientific monster was to get it classified and so brought within the meaning of the act which makes the hunting or pestering of rare wild creatures illegal. In fact, for the moment at least, the campaign is likely to have the opposite effect, and every flat-earther and flying-saucer spotter in creation will be heading for Drumnadrochit when the fine weather comes. I thought Adrian Desmond, whose *The Hot-Blooded Dinosaurs* I am taking north with me, did a good job in *The Times,* demolishing the new theory. A thousand years ago the locals believed there were monsters in all the biggest, deepest and darkest lochs. These myths lingered on until recent times around Loch Awe and Loch Hourn as well as Ness. The last survived because Ness is the biggest and darkest (and second deepest), and was near enough to the railway to become the natural choice for the new institution of the silly season in the 1930s. I have studied Loch Ness from many angles and do not believe there is any monster there. Just as well. As Maudie Littlehampton pointed out, if there *was,* the first thing this Government would do would be to subsidise it. Who wants monsters on the rates?

Paul Johnson

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The challenge to the Church is formidable. It is a challenge which frequently goes unnoticed and unanswered at both local and personal levels. Major contributions are surely being demanded from: (1) Parish priests teaching Christian views of sex. (2) PCCs having sex on their agendas. – *Church Times* (Dr D. J. Lambert)

☐ Thame Town Council's chances of securing the town rubbish tip for recreation purposes may be threatened. – *Thames Gazette* (T. J. Aspley)

☐ Women are to be excluded from the draw for the 64 places in the eleventh annual world conker championships, to be held at Ashton, near Oundle, Northamptonshire, in October. Hitherto only men have taken part. Mr Frank Elsom, chairman of the organisers, said: 'The event would be ridiculed if it was open to women.' – *The Times* (Ruth M. Temple)

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Hugh Thomas

Writing for the Morgue

I think it was in 1963, a little after the murder of President Kennedy, that I was dining with Claud Cockburn and among the guests was Donald McLachlan, who was then editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*. The conversation turned to the subject of death, and Claud gave a curious account of the death of the Spanish anarchist Durruti at the gates of Madrid in 1936. Mr McLachlan then turned to me and asked me to write an obituary of Franco for his paper. 'But he's not dying,' I ventured to point out, 'he's only just 70.' Mr McLachlan brushed this aside and I duly wrote an article for him for which he paid me handsomely. Many years passed, Mr McLachlan, sadly, was killed in a car crash, but Franco lived on. Once I was asked by the then editor of the NEW STATESMAN, the late Richard Crossman, to write an obituary of Franco for *his* paper, but I had to say that I was already booked. It sticks in my memory that, soon after the fall of the first Wilson government, I heard Crossman complain to Lady Pamela Berry that one of her papers had chosen a radical such as myself (as I then was) to commemorate Franco.

In the summer of 1974 it began to seem that, after all, Franco might be mortal and I began to wonder whether I shouldn't add something to the *Sunday Telegraph*'s obituary. After all, a lot had happened in Spain in the last ten years and some discussion as to whether or no Franco had any part in Spain's economic transformation seemed desirable. I rang up Peregrine Worsthorne to try to make the arrangements. I had, as it happened, no copy of what I had written ten years before. But an astonishing thing seemed to have happened: there was no obituary in the *Telegraph* files. I talked to my agent about it. He seemed less surprised than I was: 'Oh I expect Donald McLachlan put it in his pocket and forgot about it,' he said airily. 'Anyway you were paid, weren't you?'

I was still seething with rage when Frank Giles of the *Sunday Times* rang and said that he thought Franco was going to die. Would I write an obituary for him? I certainly would, I said. I told him of the strange affair of the *Sunday Telegraph*. He chuckled over the telephone. I wrote the article for, disconcertingly as a matter of fact, a figure slightly less than half what the *Sunday Telegraph* had paid ten years before. The status of obituarists seemed very much in decline. I had just asked my secretary to type this new article at her leisure, and send it to Frank Giles, when he telephoned again. 'It seems pretty obvious that Franco's going to die,' he said. 'Can we have the article round now? Put it in a taxi.' I explained that it was being typed. It would be put in the post that day. It was a Friday. I was going to Italy the next day. 'No, no,' said Frank Giles, 'we can't trust the post these days, and anyway *The Times*'s postal department is in confusion.' (It seemed the paper had moved house the previous week.)

I arranged that if the article had not reached them by the first post my secretary would read out the article over the telephone. I, however, by that time would be at Dover. I would myself ring up from the harbour. When I did so from a call-box at the sea, I heard that the article had been read over the telephone. Franco seemed to be sinking. The *Sunday Times* would publish the article the next day. They did so. But Franco did not die. Both my and the *Sunday Times*'s blushes were to some extent spared by the Cyprus *coup d'état* which captured the headlines.

I was, however, now as angry with the *Sunday Times* for publishing my article as I was with the *Sunday Telegraph* for losing another version of it, and was therefore in a very favourable mood when Terence Kilmartin of the *Observer* rang me up some time later; and I agreed to write for them a third obituary of Franco, which they of course would undertake not to use until the General was really dead.

I will skip various arrangements which I made in the meantime with the BBC (the Spanish service, the overseas service, Radio 4 and so on) and come hastily to the *dénouement*. When last year Franco got ill again, the editor of the *Spectator* rang up and asked for an obituary of Franco by me. I laughingly explained that I was committed to the *Observer*, and suggested someone else. Soon after that, Nora Beloff telephoned: she was, she said, just looking at her obituary of General Franco and wanted to check something about the background of the Bishop of . . . 'Good God,' I interrupted, '*your* obituary? What about mine?' I heard her exploding quietly. She had, she said, written an obituary in 1971. 'Are you sure it wasn't 1931?' I said rudely, but by that time she was out of earshot. Shortly after, Mr Donald Trelford's soothing voice came on the line. They'd made a mistake and when I was asked to write they'd forgotten about Nora. They were terribly sorry but they thought they'd have to use Nora's article. They did so, the next day but one. There was no doubt justification, since, late on Saturday night, Franco was reported to have been given the last rites. But, despite that, he did not die, as I noted with a certain grim satisfaction.

In the event, I was happy to find that the only article of mine to appear when Franco did really die some weeks after this second major false alarm was in the excellent new Spanish weekly paper *Cambio 16:* the culmination of a series of very surprising instances of confusion in our national press surely untypical of our present high-grade senior industrial management. Franco might perhaps have derived a certain mild amusement from this strange tale if he had only had a sense of humour (on which subject, see the *Sunday Times*, 24 July 1974). The question I have not resolved is: if you write an obituary of somebody, are you living in the past or the future?

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Panto-Time

A stage-struck child born in 1910 and in Barnes, London, was in luck, for just down the road, over that Boat Race suspension bridge, stood the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, where successful West End productions petered out in a profitable fortnight. By the time I was six I had seen *Peter Pan* twice and had played a loud part in Tinker Bell's miraculous resuscitation. Then came two Christmas pantomimes – *Robinson Crusoe* and *Aladdin*. Perversely I rather preferred the Bad Fairy, all cackles and menace and toothless curses, to the simpering Good Fairy, wobbling to and fro on her points.

I looked on the pantomimes with a slightly patronising gaze as by this time I felt myself theatrically to be something of an old hand, having instantly volunteered when our kindergarten was asked to provide an item for a wartime charity concert. Mary White and I recited the Kipling poem, 'Where are you going to, all you big steamers?' Mary, in primrose yellow, supplied the questions and I, in a sailor suit and on behalf of the steamers, supplied the answers. I also supplied an assortment of supposedly nautical gestures to go with them (eyes shaded seawards, hitching of bell bottoms, a lively hornpipe step or two) and I doubt if the Barnes town hall has ever been treated to a more revolting spectacle. The applause was thunderous and went straight to my head.

But it wasn't allowed to stay there. Children in those days were a good bit repressed – kindly treated, usually, but in no way encouraged to shine. I used to be sent sometimes to a Sunday afternoon church service and when the offertory bag was going round we all sang,

Hear the pennies dropping!
Hark, the pennies fall!
Every one for Jesus,
He shall have them all.

Well, I thought, this is a rum business!

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Jesus is in heaven, what on earth does He want with our pennies? And so I piped up with a question along these general lines and got into terrible hot water – 'irreligious child, impertinence, how dare you speak?' – and so on. My moment of glory was over.

On our return from the pantomime outings, my parents, keen theatre-goers, were full of happy reminiscence. Some years before, they had been to Drury Lane and had seen Dan Leno, famous both as beanstalk Jack's doting mother (Mrs Simpson, of all evocative names) and as governess to the Babes in the Wood. There was also the merry occasion when he had appeared with Marie Lloyd, recklessly cast in the title role of *Red Riding Hood*. The director naïvely thought that it would provide a moving moment if Miss Lloyd, while preparing for bed, knelt and said her prayers. This she duly did but then, being Marie Lloyd, she peered under the bed for a handy object that wasn't there and then prowled round the room in further, frantic search (this moment was subsequently cut). Meanwhile, Dan Leno as the Dame was disrobing in a flurry of red flannel petticoats and whalebone corsets.

'Where is her equal in tights today?' Godfrey Winn once dramatically asked. He was referring, of course, to Dorothy Ward, one of the best Principal Boys of them all. Nowadays, real young men are more usually pressed into service, most modern children being so knowledgeable ('Mummy, is that big tall lady a lesbian?'). But in their heyday, slapping those firm thighs, how splendid they were – Clarice Mayne as Jack, Cora Goffin (now Lady Littler) delighting the Midlands year after year, Vesta Tilley as Captain Tralala in *Sinbad*, and to my mind the most remarkable of all, Miss Fay Compton. She was a good old 48 when she last did the Prince in *Cinderella* and an astonishment of youth and grace and precision and firm singing. When I met her, I asked how it was done. 'You must believe every single thing you're doing – the swaggering about, the love-making, those weird rhyming couplets. If you don't, the children smell a rat at once and you're done for.'

Years ago, on a sunny August day, I was fortunate enough to see Dorothy Ward, looking, as always, just about 16, giving a lunch party at the Ivy Restaurant. Gathered happily together were seven other handsome ladies – pretty summer hats, white gloves – and there was a purposeful air about them all. There was no doubt what it was – a meeting of provincial Principal Boys up in London to choose the songs they were all going to belt out twice daily for 12 weeks from Boxing Day. I somehow felt that it would have been fitting for Miss Ward to greet these figures in Shakespearean fashion:

> How now, sweet Leeds? Welcome, good Huddersfield: Come, gentle Birmingham and hither, valiant Hull, trill me your ditties awhile!

Miss Ward is famous too for an act of selfless devotion and heroism. At the final curtain, she used to risk immediate electrocution by getting herself plugged in to an electrical point in the stage and lighting up several coloured bulbs concealed here and there about her person. Our cheers were deafening.

In my childhood I passed the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, almost every day. No schoolboy ever went to school more willingly and my shining morning face was a sight to behold on the No 9 bus as it bowled down Castelnau, crossed Hammersmith Broadway, and stopped at Colet Gardens. For there, overlooking what were then St Paul's School playing-fields, stood the world's least intimidating school – the Froebel Institute.

The Froebel positively bulged with delights. There were Miss Baines and Miss Willis and Miss Champness. In jam jars there were sticky chestnut buds that excitingly opened. There was a vast sand-pit and a revolving summerhouse. There were steaming roly-poly puddings and, best of all for me, there were endless theatricals, in particular *Hiawatha*. We recited *Hiawatha*, we learnt chunks of *Hiawatha*, we acted *Hiawatha*. The boys took it in turns to *be* Hiawatha, and when my go came round, the girl allotted to me as my Minnehaha, or Laughing Water, was rather tall and beefy and was called Felicity. She could only be squeezed with difficulty into our communal wigwam.

For the day of the actual school concert they had obtained a rather more commodious wigwam, and while poor old Felicity was blundering her way into it behind the curtain, a largish lady in the full bloom of middle age seated herself at the piano on the front part of the stage and, after warming up the instrument and herself with some elaborate and tuneful bangings, started out on a number new to me, *There are Fairies at the Bottom of my Garden*.

The *chanteuse* did her very best with the nauseating affair, but when she came to the line 'Did you know that they could sit upon a moonbeam?' it was too much for me. Apart from anything else, the nursery word for 'bottom' was 'sit-upon'. I lost the little control I ever had. Chuckles, increasing in violence, could be heard from behind the scenes, and heard unfortunately by my mother, seated proudly in the front row, as befitted the fair Wenonah, or Hiawatha's mother.

And, alas, the fair Wenonah became extremely angry later and we travelled home in silence. Various privileges were withdrawn (I trembled for my Christmas treat, *Goody Two Shoes*, but we went). I was scowled at. Laughing Water took it upon herself to get grumpy. But did, you wonder, this cruel cold-shouldering stop me enjoying ladies defiantly announcing the presence of wee-winged visitors? Not yet it hasn't.

Letters to the Editor

The MacDonald Papers

Sir, In your issue of 19 December Crucifer refers to my letter in *The Times* in which I criticised Mr David Marquand for keeping, for his own use, the Ramsay MacDonald Papers for eight years. Crucifer was right in correcting me by saying that Mr Marquand has, in fact, had these Papers for more than 12 years. Since the editor of *The Times* is unwilling to publish a second letter from me in reply to Mr Marquand, may I through your columns ask Mr Marquand whether he disagrees with any of the following points?

(1) The MacDonald Papers have been in his possession since 1962.

(2) The Papers were catalogued by the Public Record Office in 1968 and then returned to him.

(3) He has given access to these papers selectively, to people of his own choice, since then.

(4) There is nothing wrong or improper for the writer of Ramsay MacDonald's official biography to retain physical possession of the Papers for a reasonable length of time.

(5) Is not nearly 14 years rather too long a period to be regarded as reasonable?

HUMPHRY BERKELEY

Three Pages Yard
London W6

Sir, Crucifer is mistaken in saying I was denied access to the MacDonald Papers when writing *Politicians and the Slump*. In fact, I was given permission to use the Papers by Malcolm MacDonald, and saw them at David Marquand's house. Acknowledgments to both appeared in the preface of my book.

Crucifer is quite right, though, to raise the important question of what ought to be the rights of families, trustees, authors etc. in relation to papers of unquestioned historical importance. The practice of restricting access is more widespread than is commonly realised. Perhaps every great man or woman is entitled to one 'court' biography immediately or soon after his or her death. The denial of access to papers many years after death on the grounds that some huge commemorative work is being planned or is in progress, or that the scholar in question is unsuitable, cannot be defended. Its only result is to impoverish history.

ROBERT SKIDELSKY

18 Abinger Road
London W4

What's Wrong with Socialism?

Sir, It's about time poor Auberon Waugh's nightmares about socialism were put to rest. Then perhaps he might – even at this late hour – jump on the bandwagon, and so become – after the revolution – an 'Honoured Artist of the Republic', with the possible right to retain his *dacha* in Combe Florey, instead of, say, retiring in gnashing exile to the Bahamas. Or working the Cheshire salt seams, along with John Braine, Kingsley Amis and Bob Conquest.

Transference of Mr Waugh – and possibly the rest of us – to China, Russia, Cuba etc. might well involve us in hardships to which we are totally unaccustomed. Such as working an eight-hour day, for example. However – and this is the point – for the vast majority, where a socialist economic system has been introduced, the results have been overwhelmingly beneficial. Mr Waugh may not want to compare what life was like before but *they* do. They know the difference between what they've got and what dad, grandad, had. To them at any rate the 'great leap forward' is no fiction but a fact of existence. The point too that the Russians – who started in 1917 where Britain was in 1800 – have had to do it *twice* since then – due to the appalling devastation of the second world war – is

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always overlooked by Mr Waugh when he so compassionately bemoans the penurious state of the Soviet worker.

The simple truth is that socialism is the imposition of sanity on the berserk, of the rational on chaos, of thought on impulse, of social concern on individual greed. It is a formula that works, a formula that, for example, does not leave national welfare and prosperity dependent on the moods and whims of a handful of international speculators gambling on the money market. A formula, finally, as foreign as the British Labour Party in 1905 which incorporated it in its constitution.

Britain remains one of the richest and most technically advanced nations on the surface of the earth. With these assets, there is absolutely no reason why we should be suffering this crisis, these ludicrous cuts in social services, education, housing etc. There is no reason to assume either then that the full implementation of socialism in Britain – not some watery ineffectual 'mix', of course – will not also effect a general economic improvement corresponding and proportionate to that which the socialist countries have already experienced. *Plus* – if Mr Waugh can persuade his friends not to do a Chile on us – the preservation of democracy; indeed, its extension on a scale not previously known.

Good night, Mr Waugh.

VICTOR JONES

34 Templecombe Way
Morden, Surrey

Sir, Auberon Waugh contends (NS 19 December) that 'socialism, in practice, is bound to be bureaucratic, bound to be inefficient, more likely than not to be corrupt, bound to be totalitarian and bound to be repressive'.

Unlike, I imagine, most of your readers, I agree. But Waugh himself lapses into one of these terminological tricks by which socialists contrive to conceal from themselves and others the implications of the by now abundant experience of socialism in practice. For he speaks still of the USSR 'after 30 years of peace and 58 of *attempted* socialism' (my italics).

It is both essential to Waugh's argument and the truth that the USSR has not merely attempted but achieved as near as makes no matter full socialism. By this Waugh means, and I mean, and until only yesterday everyone else meant, that there Clause IV is law: all the means of production, distribution and exchange are nationalised; and, for good measure, the provision of education, health and other welfare services is also a state monopoly.

Inordinate confusion is caused – and, I suspect, by many socialists intended – when those who dislike what they see in or hear of the USSR (and the other by now all too numerous socialist countries) describe such things not as socialism in practice but as 'attempted socialism', or state capitalism, or even state socialism. (What other sort do they have in mind?) In lapsing into this sort of inconsistent misdescription Waugh is human, all too human: 'We are all atheists now, thank God.'

ANTONY FLEW

Department of Philosophy
University of Reading

Scotch Barbarians

Sir, I agree with Alan Watkins (Spotlight 26 December) that the 'Scotch barbarians' make an impact out of all proportion to their numerical importance. But this should be no surprise to him – they have been doing it for a long time: in literature from our first (6th century) Scottish poets, Aneurin, prince of Manau Gododin (better known as the Lothians), and Taliesin, a good Clydesider, to Dunbar, Burns, Scott, Carlyle, Stevenson and Barrie; philosophers from Duns Scotus to David Hume; economists from Adam Smith to James and J. S. Mill; engineers like Rennie and Telford; the painters Raeburn, Ramsay and Wilkie; architects like Chambers, the Adam brothers, Rennie Mackintosh and Basil Spence; medical pioneers such as Hunter and Fleming; inventors and scientists from Watt to Watson-Watt; and of course Keir Hardie. To name but a few.

But where are the Welch barbarians? Offhand, I can think of only Owain Glyndwr, Lloyd George, Nye Bevan, Augustus John, Dylan Thomas and Barry John. Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a nobody?

TOM BAISTOW

WC1

Sir, Richard West (London Diary, 12 December) is needlessly offensive when he declares that he thinks 'most English people dislike Scots more than the Irish' and that 'if the Scots ever get going, I intend to run for my life to the Continent'. My experience is that most English people do not dislike anyone very much, but let me read Richard West an object lesson. My grandfather had ten children, of whom four left Scotland, while a fifth left but subsequently returned home. Of the 27 grandchildren 12 do not live in Scotland. In short, if you are born a Scot, you have an almost 50-50 chance of becoming an emigrant. At least that is the experience of my family and its collateral branches. In short, Richard West may have Scots as neighbours. He had better get his running trunks on immediately and get to hell out of it. When he arrives at Calais he will have time to reflect on what Scottish nationalism is all about. It is about jobs at home.

R. F. LESLIE

Department of History
Queen Mary College
London E1

Funny Men

Sir, Where did Richard West (London Diary 12 December) get this odd idea that funny men tend to be right-wing? I would, by personal experience, claim the opposite. These writers have often made me laugh aloud: Alan Coren, Michael Frayn, Nancy Banks-Smith, Clive James, Barry Norman, Stanley Reynolds, Peter Black, Bernard Levin.

Two things stand out. Most of the writers have done time – I choose my words with care – as TV critics and, also, most of them have worked on the *Guardian.* Apart from Bernard Levin, who has more wings than a gaggle of Concordes, who of these writers would accept right-wing classification?

LARRY ADLER

Primrose Hill
London NW1

Square-bashing for Recruits

Sir, What a pity that Danah Zohar (NS 21 November) and Carol Mathias (Letters 5 December) chose not to write to the PEO at TH. Had they done so, they would have discovered that the PES (Political Education Section) has the answer to their needs.

Under 'A more lively Party' campaign we have developed original material to involve, inform and train the party member. The new member's guide, for example, 'The Labour Party and You', contains seven information sheets which, apart from providing an introduction to the party, illustrate how policy is made and how members can help to fashion it. For those likely to recoil from our obsession with abbreviations, there is an invaluable initiation to party language; and to show that we don't just talk to ourselves the pack is rounded off with a glimpse of the party's participation in the community.

For those seeking (or sought for) public office we offer three correspondence courses: Introduction to Local Government; Guide to School Governors/Managers, and Guide to Community Health Councils. The less ambitious, but willing, member can benefit from a week's residential course.

The party's handling of members has in recent times become the subject of much ridicule and easy laughs. Danah Zohar and Co. certainly amusingly portray the other side of the non-encouragement coin – over-encouragement. On a more serious note, however, they reveal a total lack of practical (even intelligent) application to the principle of a radical and fundamental transformation of society without violent upheaval. Only by training those who will permeate the present system for change will the PLP, NEC, TH and CLP become household terms as others have in a more sinister manner.

NEIL VANN
Political Education Officer
The Labour Party
Transport House, SW1

Caught Out

Sir, Please tell Old Stinker (Christmas Snorter, 26 December) that it was the Baker, *not* the Butcher, who vanished 'in the midst of the word he was trying to say' when he discovered that the Snark *was* a Boojum. So far as we know the Butcher escaped with his life and we may be fairly sure that, with his gentle companion, the Beaver, he ended his days in peace.

SARAH THOMPSON

St Andrew's Cottage
Much Hadham, Herts.

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BOOKS & ARTS

Craig Raine

The Man who Broke the Bank

James Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist by STAN GEBLER DAVIES *Davis-Poynter* £6.00

It is a whimsical coincidence that two of the century's greatest literary assets – Joyce and Eliot – should have found temporary refuge in the banking business. Eliot, though, was a credit to the profession, and stuck at it from 1917 to 1924, remarking to John Quinn in April 1923: 'I don't know whether I have ever explained this to you, but the Bank is a secure job for life, with a pension at 60.' Joyce was a decided debit. Working from July 1906 to February 1907 in the Nast-Kolb Schumaker Bank in Rome, he squandered his salary, wore holes in the seat of his trousers, covered them with his tail-coat even in the hottest months, and was reprimanded for slovenly posture. Where Eliot displayed his life-long tact and adaptability, Joyce displayed his royal Irish arse and, like Stephen Dedalus, would not serve – behind desk or counter. Eliot tailored himself to the job, po-faced, pinstriped, with a gold chain carefully mountaineering across a granite-black waistcoat; Joyce in 'new secondhand clothes', tennis shoes and an ashplant, cried (Larkin-like) *Stuff your pension* and tried the most difficult route to the top of Parnassus.

Essentially a loner (he once told Beckett, 'I don't love anyone except my family'), Joyce cleared his route of friends and literary helpers. In Paris for the first time, he was the recipient of shrewd paternal advice, retailed in his mother's thriftily punctuated letters: 'you cannot get on in your line without friends', his father insisted with bourgeois caution. Joyce, meanwhile, ignored this memo and, like an uncommercial traveller, used her niece Iseult's temporary quarantine as an excuse to keep his ill-shod foot out of Maud Gonne's influential door. Other potentially useful doorsteps were crossed by Joyce but (shades of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*) were methodically dunged upon as he left. Lady Gregory got him reviewing for the Dublin *Daily Express*, only to be subsequently panned by her protégé; George Russell and Yeats both helped him out, only to find themselves belittled in *The Holy Office*. It was years before Joyce was confident enough and desperate enough to accept the help of Ezra Pound, and even then he managed, while receiving a pair of secondhand boots, to daunt Eliot and Wyndham Lewis with his muted arrogance. Money debts never bothered Joyce, but literary debts were another matter – in the latter respect, he could have answered Mr Deasy's question in *Ulysses* ('Can you feel that? *I owe nothing.* Can you?') with an honest yes. Instinct made him offend before any literary loans of importance could be transacted, and if he was not a borrower in this sense, neither was he a lender: when Gogarty lifted one of the titles Joyce used to collect for future use (a creative trait common to him and Wallace Stevens), Joyce read Gogarty's essay and tore off what belonged to him.

He guarded his literary capital avariciously, as his dealings with Synge show. Sensing a rival, though one who could give him first-hand advice about starvation, Joyce carried off the dramatist's *Riders to the Sea* from the Hotel Corneille in Paris. To Stanislaus in Dublin he reported gleefully: 'I am glad to say that ever since I read it, I have been riddling it mentally till it has not a sound spot.' But it is the conclusion to this letter which discloses his real worry – 'thanks be to God, Synge isn't an Aristotelian'. Joyce, the recent re-interpreter of 'pity and terror', *was*. In fact, Synge had not trespassed on Joyce's territory but, unable to forgive the moment of fearful apprehension, Joyce prosecuted just the same – returning the blunt verdict of 'dwarf-drama' when he gave back the manuscript.

This determination to be original is reflected in his comment on *Dubliners*:

> The stories in *Dubliners* seem to be indisputably well done but, after all, perhaps many people could do them as well. I am not rewarded by any feeling of having overcome difficulties.

They were, for all their gauntness, too conventional. The Bank, so to speak, failed to give him job satisfaction. Moreover, the great experiments which followed – *A Portrait, Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* – are mirrored in Joyce's life by equally extraordinary business ventures. Safety did not interest him. Like Blougram, his interest was on 'the dangerous edge of things'. A natural innovator, an inventor in the round, Joyce vindicates Carlyle's notion that the great man contains the potential for many roles. The King of prose, with a retinue of professors, might easily have been the Emperor of Ice Cream, for as Stanislaus remarked, 'In my brother, business lost to poetry a "go-getter" on the American model.'

His schemes, all of which came to nothing, were as radically visionary as his fiction – Joyce was ever the prospector, never the young man with good prospects. Being first, being original, was more important to him than security. His bright ideas included an early attempt to establish himself as a joint stock company and sell off shares, a plan to develop Galway as a major transatlantic port, another to set up the first Irish weekly on the continental model, another to export fireworks and Irish tweeds to Trieste, yet another to found the first cinema in Ireland. In retrospect, curiously enough, it is the wildest scheme which now looks most attractive – the joint stock company. The rest are shrewd and, typically, ahead of their time. They failed, however, partly because Joyce's personal magnetism was a less powerful attraction to capital than the ubiquitous Bank (or timid backers cut their losses at the first difficulty), and partly because his versatility was fatally fertile. A man with only one idea is inevitably single-minded in his perseverance, but Joyce moved on restlessly to the next and the next. In any case, that fugitive feeling of 'having overcome difficulties', which he missed in the composition of *Dubliners*, was not something that mere business could give him – finding the necessary capital was simply his day-to-day sponging writ large, as dull and irritating as finding a printer for *Ulysses* once it was written.

In literature, on the other hand, the idea itself is nothing until the execution is complete. Content is form and the pathetically thin plot of *Ulysses* (a day in the life of a Jewish cuckold) is drab beside the obvious glamour of Dublin's first cinema. It needed all of Joyce's 'descriptive lust', as a Triestine pupil perceptively called it, to make the idea live. Nevertheless, despite

David Harsent

Birds, Roosting in Bad Weather

By midday, there was something in the sky
like the smudge of another galaxy.
Everything cooled and darkened,
umbra along the tunnels of the maze, shadows greening a pool,
the garden's Dionysus, dulled.

The very edge of the rainstorm brushed the trees,
feather and leaf;
and if someone had stood in the lee of the sandstone wall,
smoking, perhaps,
and sweetening her teeth with an apple,
that fateful letter crushed in her raincoat pocket,
she might have watched the first spread of the lightning
over the backdrop grey
and birds riding the blackened twigs in silence,
fire and flesh that nobody can own.

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this difference, these commercial ventures are siblings of the great experimental works and demonstrate the essential wholeness of Joyce's life. It was all of a piece – Joyce's elopement with Nora Barnacle becomes the sexual frankness of *Ulysses*; the spatio-temporal puns Joyce arranged in his life (eating wild duck when meeting Ibsen's translator) find their counterparts in the linguistic coincidences of *Finnegans Wake*; singing in the quintet from *Die Meistersinger* produced the form of the Sirens episode; Joyce's nifty projects suffer ironic alchemy in the Barmecidal business wheezes of Bloom.

The weakness of Stan Gébler Davies's new biography is that, unlike Richard Ellman's elegant and detailed work, it does not explore the crucial symbiosis of life and art. Mr Gébler Davies chooses to ignore the work and concentrate on the life, with the glib disclaimer, 'my book is short on critical waffle'. And though he points out the most obvious correspondences, he cannot match Professor Ellman's wide-ranging awareness of how the tiniest incidents, the most obscure acquaintances fed the work. This new biography is a gay scamper of disenchanted prose, but it cannot begin to challenge Professor Ellman's biography, which does for Joyce what Livingstone Lowes did for Coleridge in *The Road to Xanadu*. Thus, Mr Gébler Davies tells us that Joyce read D'Annunzio: Professor Ellman tells us that Joyce admired *Il Fuoco* for turning an iconoclastic life to fiction, eliminating action, and using lyrical prose. *James Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist* is the thin end of the Ellman wodge, omitting much and adding only the speculation that Joyce and his father may have contracted syphilis, and the more certain probability that Joyce slept with Marthe Fleischmann in Zurich. It is not a dull book – Joyce's life was not a dull one – but there are more debits than credits.

Frank Kermode

Spots of Time

A Life of One's Own by GERALD BRENAN
Cape £5.95

This is a reissue of a book first published in 1962 and it deals with the first 26 years of Brenan's life. A sequel, *Personal Record, 1920-1972*, appeared in 1974, and will be more freshly remembered, perhaps as appendix, of considerable candour and elegance, to the corpus of Bloomsbury memorabilia that has built up in the last few years.

Since what we now have before us is an account of childhood, adolescent travel and service at the front, we cannot expect it to have the mildly scandalous quality of the second volume; and historically its primary value is to be sought in the detail it provides of an earlier and perhaps less attractive period of civility. From the point of view of the author, of course, such benefits are by-products of his main project, which is to relate 'the development of the sensibility and character of the child, the boy, the adolescent' who evolved into the engaging writer, scholar, lover of girls, described in the second book.

He has tried, he says, to be absolutely truthful without being absolutely confessional. And obviously he worked from a good store of diaries, letters and notes – nothing so ample, perhaps, as the 400,000 words of his letters to Carrington, which lie behind Volume II, but still enough to supplement an old man's memory. And yet, for all his honesty and skill, there must surely be a measure of falsity in such an enterprise. Brenan thinks that Goethe was wrong in suggesting that the autobiographer must develop or 'embellish' his memories; yet he cannot help doing so, and might as well do so consciously. This, in fact, is the way great autobiographies are made: *The Prelude* is the obvious example, and it is based on the premise that the raw data must pass through a complex associative process that is as long as a life.

A further objection against the claim to simple truth-telling is that Brenan is very markedly a stylist; his sentences conform, for the most part, to a particular rhythm of thought, his voice is steady on the note – so that one has little sense of fluctuation and change. An autobiographer ought perhaps to be a bit of a ventriloquist, producing a different voice for different epochs of his life, rather than subduing them to the tones of his ultimate maturity.

Under the early life of Brenan there is clearly visible a paradigm of upper-class childhood at the turn of the century; it is amusingly marked by the photographs of 'Gerald Brenan on his pony' (attended by two Indian bearers) and of 'Aunt Maude, who was considered "fast", in the author's father's car at Miserden House', and of Brenan as a rather dashing subaltern. Father, dreary, classbound and child-repellent, provided him with a gentlemanly context and a taste for travel; he was as much at home among the flora of South Africa as at the Viceroy's children's party. There was a big house in Ireland, with happy Irish servants enviably below stairs; in the drawing room Mother, evidently a dull and conventional woman, soon diminished in importance. From Sloane Court one could watch the soldiers in Chelsea Barracks and, in Pimlico, the exciting multitudes of the poor, with their 'packed and wrinkled faces'.

Then, of course, the hell of prep school, no sooner harrowed than succeeded by the worse hell of Radley, mitigated only by clandestine communings with books and Nature, and by shameless masturbation. (Can it be true that although the usual atrocity propaganda was issued to the school, the rowing eight were in fact encouraged to masturbate before important races?)

Homosexual schoolmasters made little impression on this dedicated heterosexual games-hater. Something was bound to happen to interrupt his progress toward the Army, and it did; John Hope-Johnstone, a loner, an intellectual (Nietzsche, Wilde, Romany), took over the boy when his head was full of Shelley, and became his partner in the great but abortive attempt to walk through France, Italy and Yugoslavia to the East, starting with £16.

This journey breaks the paradigm, but, for all its individuality, it is in a way also conventional; it represents the operation of those benign forces which occasionally ejected the sons of cheerless snobbish homes into that middle-class bohemianism that has been such a feature of our cultural history. Brenan's version of it includes a romantic attitude to the poor that survived even his quite fierce experience of destitution. He knew what it was like to be penniless, cold and desperate, but still saw poverty as an admirable condition, affording the possibility of 'a new and higher sort of liberty'.

Yet throughout the whole high-minded adventure, which took them into the jails and doss-houses of Southern Europe, Brenan and Hope-Johnstone maintained their class rules. They never addressed each other by name, and each simmered with his private intellectual passions: Hope-Johnstone's for grammars of all kinds, Brenan's for Rimbaud and Blake. Even Brenan's hashish fits into the role of upper-class rebel, though writing Rimbaudian 'illuminations' under the influence places him also in a poetic tradition.

The paradigm is rounded out by the 1914 war: the beasts on the Staff, the stink of the corpses, the hairbreadth escapes, the obsessive guilty courting of danger, and the reluctantly accepted MC. Lively though it is, I doubt if Brenan's war narrative will rank with the classic accounts of Blunden and Graves. But it must be said that here, as everywhere, he accurately maps his individual deviations from the overriding scheme imposed upon him. It is equally evident whether he is talking of war or flowers or landscapes or even girls. This last passion, as I've said, is very endearing. The very name 'Nancy' – which seemed fascinatingly lower-class – predisposed him to love its owners. Genital sexuality seemed to come upon him as the simplest possible extension of a long-established habit.

Brenan's habit of accuracy pays off in certain descriptions of obscurely important spots of time, for example the recollection of a hotel room in Colombo, and the crows flying in through the open window to snatch the biscuits that came with early morning tea; glossy, powerful and alarming, they made the child shrink away, but when the windows were closed and the birds flapped and cawed vainly at the glass he felt 'a sudden disappointment'. Or in a classic childhood fantasy he sees the furniture as a group of living beings 'fixed in a sort of courtesy towards one another . . . grouped in the grey, yellowish light with a solemnity that had no need of language'. Or an

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oceanic moment at St-Malo – a full moon pours across the sea its intimations of an 'over-charged, over-resplendent world'. But nothing had prepared him for the experience, and it had no effect on his life. In fact, it isn't a Wordsworthian life, fostering intuitions of unknown modes of being; the Byronic madness of the heart is closer to Brenan's experience, and when all the qualifications are made it remains good to read about.

James Fenton

Jesuitical

Landscape and Inscape: Vision and Inspiration in Hopkins's Poetry by PETER MILWARD SJ, photographed by RAYMOND SCHODER SJ *Elek* £6.00

Dylan Thomas, Poet of His People by ANDREW SINCLAIR *Michael Joseph* £6.25

'Hopkins is a religious, not merely a devotional poet,' wrote W. H. Gardner. 'Religion for him was the total reaction of the whole man to the whole life.' So there is plenty that the Jesuits could tell us about Hopkins which would provide a theological framework for a better understanding of his poetry. The silence of seven years, for instance, which followed Hopkins's decision to become a Jesuit and ended only when his rector expressed the hope that someone would write a poem about the wreck of the *Deutschland* – why should Hopkins have felt that he needed permission before putting pen to paper? Why should he have felt that it was wrong to publish? Was it unusual for a 19th-century Jesuit to revere Duns Scotus above Aquinas? And what is Scotism anyway? For the answers to such questions the reader should look elsewhere. This is not a historical or a theological book. It is a devotional manual, of a peculiarly degenerate kind.

Father Schoder, a professor at Loyola University, Chicago (and author of *Ancient Greece from the Air*) has photographed the landscapes which Hopkins knew and has, he tells us,

> often lectured for college groups with some of the resultant colour transparencies . . . This has, in a sense, amounted to a new kind of approach to literature – showing the actual object or scene which Hopkins observed so sensitively, and comparing this with his description of it. The effect on the audience is wonder . . .

at seeing, e.g., 'Yellow hornlight over St Beuno's' or 'The same with hollow hoarlight'. Here are Hopkins's skies of couple-colour, chestnut falls (well, horse-chestnut falls) and gold vermilion coals. Here too is that meal-drift moulding and melting across skies.

But beware of Father Schoder. The kestrel he shows us, with its glass eye, stuffed and perched on a papier-mâché rock (the very antithesis of 'The Windhover'), was already dead when Hopkins wrote his most famous poem. No doubt Hopkins did see the bird every day at St Beuno's, but, as Father Milward acutely observes, the only connection between it and the poem is that the words 'windhover' and 'falcon' occur in the inscription on the glass case. Father Schoder also has a photo called 'Binsey Poplars'. Is this the 'actual object or scene which Hopkins observed so sensitively'? Hopkins says that 'his' poplars are

> All felled, felled, are all felled;
> Of a fresh and following folded rank
> Not spared, *not one* . . .

(My italics.) This is not good enough for Father Milward, the Professor of English Literature at Sophia University, Tokyo, who insists that 'there is an implication that the trees have not been cut down from the roots, but have merely been lopped or thoroughly pollarded in the early spring'. In order to prove this, and several other unlikely points throughout the book, he has recourse to unconvincing echoes from Shakespeare. In vain did Hopkins write '*felled 1879*' at the top of 'Binsey Poplars'. Father Milward tells us that he and his Japanese students have prayed to Hopkins as a saint. They should also read him. This is a misleading, pious, sloppy, short, expensive book.

Andrew Sinclair's *Dylan Thomas* is also short and expensive, with a large number of well-known photographs. On Thomas's life it is good, giving an account of the fractious last years which, while clearly sympathetic to Caitlin's point of view, does not seem too partisan. Mr Sinclair never attempts to gloss over the least creditable aspects of his hero (the shabby attempt to turn himself into a conscientious objector at the outbreak of war, or the inability to sympathise with the problems of writers in Prague) and where he thinks Thomas failed he says so. On the poems themselves, however, he tells us little of interest. This is a conscientious, professional pot boiler.

Charles Fox

Gig Time

Hollywood, Mayfair and All That Jazz by ROY FOX *Leslie Frewin* £4.25

Vocal Refrain by VERA LYNN *W. H. Allen* £3.00

Take It From the Top by HUMPHREY LYTTELTON *Robson Books* £3.50

An American bandleader who charmed London's smart set in the Thirties; the singer who boosted the troops' morale a decade later; a trumpeter, and man of many other parts, who spearheaded the British jazz revival when peacetime loomed. And the life-styles are even more assorted. Roy Fox's parents were Salvation Army officers (they diversified later) who, setting out to make California a better place, found themselves in Hollywood. Vera Lynn grew up in an East End family where ears got clipped, a penn'orth of broken biscuits was a luxury, and the recalcitrant were dosed liberally with syrup of figs. When the time came for Humphrey Lyttelton to be told the facts of life, his father, second son of a seventh viscount and a master at Eton, confined himself to roaring 'Eschew evil!'

Characteristically enough, the young Lyttelton turned into a romantic socialist and Vera Lynn into a zealous home-body ('The most I wanted was a nice house'), while Roy Fox pursued glamour, bright lights and the handshakes of the great ('I don't think I have ever seen more jewels glittering,' he writes of a Command Performance before the Belgian Royal Family). He had better dress-sense too. Humph admits to inhabiting the same clothes all the

Patricia Beer

Dedication

His lover dedicated a book to him.
'For John'. Great was the pride he took,
Being half literate,
At featuring in a famous book.
Literary high life had been the bait
To get him on the hook.
Now – 'John *who*?', '*Which* John?' – they mentioned his name.

His lover adored him and was never false,
Took him to parties where he got laughed at,
Did not visit him
In hospital, was away when he came out.
Years passed. The union equalled the book in fame
Till the day of the farewell note signed 'John' in the flat.
His lover grieved to the last but died of something else.

John came back from abroad to the old town,
Made his arrangements, went to the funeral,
Stood in a retired place.
Down the path shuffled the sad six-legged turtle
One huge wreath alone on its carapace
With a card the size of a page, each letter a capital,
Where the world could see a message written: 'From John'.

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time, waiting for trends to come to him; Vera Lynn was forever running things up in her dressing room between shows; but Roy Fox actually become famous for wearing full evening dress on the stand.

He had a shaky start, though, appearing, like the rest of his band, in a tuxedo for their opening at the Café de Paris. Providentially, Jack Buchanan was present to slip Roy the address of his tailor. Soon he was one of those men-about-town who copied every whim of the Prince of Wales (his death, writes Fox, was 'the end of an era'). Yet despite the constant flitting past of the famous – the romance with Jean Harlow, even encountering an unexpected fan in Goering – Roy Fox displays genuine modesty about his own achievements. When he came to Britain, after supervising music for Fox Film Studios (no relation), he was probably the only man here who grasped what the new recording techniques were about; the band he led at the Monseigneur really was one of the finest in this country – and after it got taken over by Lew Stone he put together another almost as good. And, always a difficult task, he writes with dignity about the trials and tribulations that followed the years of success. Perhaps it's all of a piece for a man whose fame as an instrumentalist was based on how *quietly* he played the trumpet.

At the moment when Roy Fox was enjoying those triumphs in Mayfair, Vera Lynn was launching out as a 'descriptive child vocalist' (7s. 6d. for three songs, 1s. 6d. for an encore). She recalls how East End clubs had rows of chairs with ledges on their backs to hold glasses of beer. Gigs with Howard Baker's many bands (very useful background stuff here for students of the period) led to fame as the singer with Ambrose's Orchestra – although she still went home every night to East Ham, where the house had no bathroom and only an outside lavatory. The war, as one wag put it at the time, might have been arranged by her agent. She analyses the reasons for her huge popularity sensibly enough, and there are horrid details of an ENSA tour of Burma (at Dimapur a bowl of thick soup could be eaten only by scooping spoonfuls from under the solid layer of flies on top). But apart from skirmishes with the BBC (who nowadays remembers the Anti-Slush Campaign?), life became much more of a jog-trot. When she got close to a gambling table in Las Vegas, even the mobsters, just like those golden-hearted hoods of Runyon's, hurried to whisk her away.

Humphrey Lyttelton knocked off his proper autobiography (*I Play As I Please*) at the end of the Fifties. *Take It From the Top* is really a collection of short pieces – witty, urbane – grouped under headings: 'Warm Up', 'Nosh & Gigs', 'Distinguished Visitors'. But some gaps in the life-story get plugged, among them the unlikely few months spent, while waiting to become a subaltern with the Grenadier Guards, at the Port Talbot Steel Works, where the industrial process kept suggesting similes of ingestion and defecation. For jazz buffs the real meat lies in the reminiscing about visiting American musicians (maybe the stint as a food-writer creeps into the imagery; the way, for example, Dizzy Gillespie's cheeks 'puffed out like aubergines'). Warts are not overlooked – Sidney Bechet's penchant for playing the tyrant gets chillingly conveyed – but the undoubted high spot is the closing piece, a moving appreciation of Louis Armstrong.

'Do I make my disasters clear?' Nicholas Moore once wrote in a war-time poem. And the capacity to chronicle humiliation is at least a part of the autobiographer's duty. It's significant that for all three authors those disasters were mostly professional. 'You are probably the lousiest conductor I've had the misfortune of meeting,' Frank Sinatra told Roy Fox after a rehearsal (they made it up later). 'It's against my principles to train a voice of *that* type,' said a singing teacher to whom Vera Lynn, already something of a star, had gone seeking help. And Joe Glaser, Louis Armstrong's cast-iron manager, when asked if he could fix up an American tour for Humph's band, simply replied: 'Lyttelton? Schmyttelton.'

Richard Hewlings

Scouser

Autobiographical Sketches by MAXWELL FRY
Elek £5.50

Maxwell Fry was born in Liverpool, the son of a business man, not quite the social equal of the ship-owning families whose lives centred round Sefton Park Unitarian Church, but rich enough to spend holidays in a rented house in the Lakes, and to have relatives who lived a life of modest idleness beside the commuter rail tracks in the Wirral. He was educated at the Liverpool Institute, where his friends included Arthur Askey, Sir David Webster and James Laver, but a far more potent cultural influence came from the Unitarian Church, and consisted mainly of poetry readings in the church library. He became a student at the Liverpool School of Architecture, then under Sir Charles Reilly and at the height of its fame as an academy of Beaux Arts classicism, and spent a vacation in the New York office of Carrère and Hastings, at a time when, to those of a Beaux Arts persuasion, America was the Promised Land.

He moved to Chelsea in 1924, discovered Bohemia, and made an unsuccessful marriage to Ethel Speakman (to whom he allots scarcely more than a sentence). The prehistory of his life came to an end when he joined the Design and Industry Association, was shown the photograph of a building by (he thinks) Bruno Taut, and met Wells Coates.

Thenceforward his life is better known, and it is presumably for this reason that he dispatches most of it in 30 pages, and terminates it in 1939. It is of course rather tantalising that he does so, because, although better known than the story of his childhood, it is still an unusually underdocumented episode in British architectural history.

But he has two perfectly good reasons. First, he dislikes art historians, whom he calls parasites, and it can be inferred that he regards art history as a waste of time. This point of view might logically be extended to social history, which would explain why he is less interested in Liverpool's Unitarian oligarchy than in its effect upon him. It also explains the general shortage of dates, including the date of his own birth.

Secondly, it is clear that architecture, far from being his chief preoccupation, has been something he has turned to when times were bad. He took it up as a means of escaping his family, and he adopted the style that made him famous at about the time when he discovered that he disliked his first wife. The pages which precede his adoption of 'some recognisable attitude to the career I followed' are chiefly an account of his attitude towards literature – *Lycidas* in the church library, Wordsworth in the Lakes, *The Faerie Queene* in the Wirral. Books are precious, and he cultivates two elderly bibliophiles who provide the authors he 'needs' as a handbook for the future, Balzac and Baudelaire.

After literature came sex: both are set in the context of that familiar early 20th-century nightmare, the Modern City, for which, in Fry's case, Liverpool was the paradigm. Liverpool is the parasitic city, its warehouses crammed with commodities produced elsewhere; the rational city, its workers in rows of identical bye-law houses, free of imagination and disease; the megalomechanised city, its ships in the dredged and locked river, its trains in the tunnels underground; above all the materialist city, offering regular mealtimes, empty days and, for Fry's Auntie Nettie, the privilege of sitting at an upstairs window all day long, watching everybody else simply doing things. To Liverpool he devotes the first four chapters, possibly the most important in the book, which is, in the final analysis, less a history book than a Liverpudlian *Cider With Rosie*.

Neil Powell

Chronology

John Dankworth's clarinet, recorded
the month I was born: disconcerted,

I fumble in the shelves, discover
he was twenty-one. Turning over

the record, there's *Mop Mop*: I've
that, played
by the Hawk himself, half a decade

further back. Young John and Vic
don't quite
get the tricky extra half-beat right:

forgive them for youth if it inspires
these hours among the Tempos, Esquires,

Commodores, Savoys – so much to say
in each side. Old books can't talk that way.

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Bryan Wilson

The Communer Belt

Communalism: From its Origins to the 20th Century by KENNETH REXROTH *Peter Owen* £6.00

Those in search of an alternative society have often supposed their own vision to be unique, authentic, unprecedented and, above all, to be man's last chance. Although almost all communitarian ventures have failed – some of them within months – the illusion of creating a perfect and equitable communal life is perhaps today stronger than ever. The enthusiastic and immature vision of Marx in the *German Ideology* continues to captivate the young, and every year the communes arise – and collapse.

Mr Rexroth, who takes the Judeo-Christian tradition rather than the Marxist as his starting point, is under no illusions about these modern communes, which he sees as often little more than crash pads for an uncommitted, floating, and perhaps work-shy population, who are merely opting out of the everyday world. With them, the communal ideal has been reduced to being just another trip.

The history of communalism is not solely that of high-minded idealists, of course. There have been charlatans, confidence men, perverts and psychopaths among the founders of new colonies, but Rexroth avoids the temptation to devote space to people like Benjamin Purnell, who took the young women of his Michigan commune regularly to his own bed, but whose movement, the House of David, still survives in spite of the scandal. He omits discussion of the penal colony of a commune set up by Thomas Lake Harris, whose charisma was sufficient to induce Laurence Oliphant, an MP and correspondent for *The Times*, to spend several years in the commune doing menial tasks. Nor is there space for James Strang, the wayward Mormon who, after Joseph Smith's murder, set himself up as King James over a community of saints on an island in the Great Lakes. These were among the more bizarre communitarians, and of far less consequence than the half-mad Fourier, and the deranged Thomas Münzer, who necessarily feature in Mr Rexroth's pages.

But if the most lunatic communitarians have been men of religious conviction, so have been the most successful, and Rexroth properly devotes full attention to the Essenes, the Hutterites, the Shakers, and the Oneida Community. The radical and secular groups of Robert Owen, Josiah Warren and Etienne Cabet are described in considerable detail and there is a mandatory chapter on the over-celebrated Brook Farm, which achieved little more than to illustrate just how far out of touch with reality intellectuals can get.

A history of communalism could all too easily become a mere catalogue, and the author wisely confines himself to describing only the best-documented cases. In one sense, there can be no real history of communalism as such, since there is no continuing movement so much as a recrudescent enthusiasm for a new form of social organisation. The communitarian ideal is not so much historically transmitted as perennially rediscovered from first principles. Indeed, if men had realised the frequency of previous failure, some at least would have been discouraged. Only Robert Owen and, more especially, John Humphrey Noyes had a measure of historical acquaintance with communal enterprises, and they proceeded to make their own mistakes.

Communitarian experiments have most often been stimulated by an apocalyptic vision. The successful experiments have all been inspired by a sense of absolute faith, often under an authoritarian leader, and with a powerful sense of urgency derived from expectations of the imminent second advent. Such was the case with the Rappites, the Shakers, and a variety of other 18th and 19th-century American groups. The Hutterites, the most successful communal society, are something of an exception to this proposition. They have replicated their success from one community to over two hundred. But the Hutterites, if lacking an authoritarian leader, are nonetheless profoundly religious. They have succeeded in transferring total obedience from individuals to the Scriptures and to their own all-important commentaries. They have institutionalised their procedures, and so have overcome the fragility of dependence on a charismatic leader.

Mr Rexroth writes fluently, but behind his easy style there is more scholarship than he chooses to reveal (there are no footnotes, and no bibliography). One may not concur with every judgment, and one may doubt the occasional statement of fact, but a wide knowledge of the sources is always apparent. He has not chosen to offer any analysis of the structural similarities between movements, nor does he draw at all on the now well developed sociology of communitarian movements, but the reader looking for a general account of communes will find this an extremely readable book. Communal groups are often alike in the nature of their organisation, in the problems of social control, relationships, and authority, and description without an analytical framework could be tediously repetitive; it is much to Mr Rexroth's credit that, in spite of this, he sustains our interest in a narrative that never flags.

Philippe Jaccottet

Two Poems

The Screech Owl

The city sleeps in darkness and the wind blows.
It has come a long way to the quiet
privacy of our bed this June night.
While the wind ruffles the hazel trees
I am led to the edge of infinities;
and a cry comes, approaching, retreating,
like a light lost in a forest
or a shade circling in hell.
It's only the bird called the screech owl
hailing us from the depths of these
suburban woods; but already our bodies
exhale the stench of death. First light
and the bone pierces the living flesh.
Stars fade and die at the end of the street.

The Voice

What is it that sings when the other voices are silent?
Whose is that pure, deaf voice, that sibilant song?
Is it down the road, on a snow-covered lawn,
or close at hand, aware of an audience?
This is the mysterious first bird of dawn.
Do you hear the voice increase in volume
and, as a March wind quickens the creaking woods,
sing mildly to us without fear,
content in the fact of death? Do you hear?
What does it sing in the grey dawn? Nobody knows
but the song is audible only to those
whose hearts are emptied of property and desire.

These are versions of 'L'Effraie' and 'La Voix' in Jaccottet's Poésie 1946-1967, *Gallimard 1971, translated by* DEREK MAHON.

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Films

John Coleman

No, Seriously

The Return of the Pink Panther *Leicester Square Theatre*
Lucky Lady *Dominion*
Early Ozu *NFT season till 28 January*

The turn of the year is surely as good a time as any to clean our critical tools. For far too long now, a chic handful of bourgeois metropolitan reviewers has imposed its impressionistic pseudo-judgments on the larger public, thereby preventing the free flow of the kind of material that ought to be on tap 24 hours a day at the BFI's regional film theatres, in schools, libraries and supermarkets the length and breadth of the land. The neglect of such masters as Sam Fuller, Sam Peckinpah and Sam Goldwyn (to instance only an obvious triad) is sign enough that the serious study of cinema has been, and continues to be, impeded by a cabal of trendies totally ignorant of the names – let alone the work – of men like Saussure, Barthes, Metz and Melly. Without giving you too much to chew on all at once, I shall settle for taking my text from the seminal American logician, Charles Sanders Peirce (d. 1914). Here is part of his definition of an 'index' (we shall come to his use of the words 'icon' and 'symbol' in subsequent articles):

> I see a man with a rolling gait. This is a probable indication that he is a sailor. I see a bowlegged man in corduroys, gaiters and a jacket. These are probable indications that he is a jockey or something of the sort. A sundial or clock indicates the time of day.

Setting aside such nonsenses as the first man being a drunk and the second suffering from chilly ankles, one can hardly controvert the eye-opening likelihood of the last proposition. From these radical insights, then, we may proceed to say something useful for a change about the week's offerings.

Blake Edwards is a director with a considerable number of films to his credit, some of which are better than others (though whether their quality should be our immediate concern is, of course, moot). Throughout his career a man/woman dichotomy has been much in evidence: Jack Lemmon/Lee Remick in *Days of Wine and Roses*, George Peppard/ Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and so on. All the more revelatory, therefore, that – in resuming his role as *metteur-en-scène* in the widest sense possible of the 'Pink Panther' series, and again we discern a triadic disposition (this would be his fourth had not Bud Yorkin made the 1968 *Inspector Clouseau* with Alan Arkin) – he should have chosen to depart from this thematic idiosyncrasy in favour of what we can only designate as a man/man/man trichotomy. Peter Sellers, as the unfortunately accident-prone French police officer, is not merely subject to the recalcitrance of objects (door-handles, bell-pushes, light-bulbs, even a vacuum cleaner that becomes personalised to the point of consuming a parrot) but directly subjected to attack from male associates of high/low status: Herbert Lom, as the hysterical superior who repeatedly endeavours to do away with him, mistakenly employing such devices as a revolver-shaped cigarette lighter and himself ending up in a padded cell after multiple failures; and Bert Kwouk, as Clouseau's equivocal manservant, apparently there – as in a wild assault from within a frigidaire – to chop his 'master' to bits via an ingenious 'send-up' of the currently voguish techniques of Kung Fu. The implications of these radically differentiated sources of onslaught will not be lost on students of the ideology of class warfare, some of whom may find it dismaying that Edwards should allow his middle-man (Clouseau) to remain impervious to harm from boss and worker alike.

Similar confusions, it has to be said, abound throughout *The Return of the Pink Panther*. Repetitive play is made with the unhappy – though somehow holy – scapegoat's vowelling. His requests for 'a *pheune*', 'a *rheume*', meet with baffled attempts to understand what he is talking about. Presumably the comic element has to be reckoned with in all this, much as when he rejects a hotel porter's offer to take his hat, coat and gloves, yet readily hands them over to a fellow who walks out with them, gets into a car and drives away. The motif of linguistic ambiguity recurs interestingly elsewhere: Clouseau, who is incidentally after the mysterious Phantom, suspected of having stolen the world's largest diamond, tells a taxi driver to 'follow that car', upon which the chauffeur leaps from his seat and pants off on foot after the vehicle in question. It will be appreciated that nothing less than a monograph with footnotes could do justice to this latest item in the Edwards *oeuvre*, the Sellers canon and the Thriller genre: collectors of the iconography of Bogart will readily enough pick up references to *The Maltese Falcon* and *Casablanca* – to put them where they will. The animated credits sequence, which Dick Williams brought the 77-year-old Ken Harris from Hollywood to draw, has been described as brilliant, a mini-parody of show business. Indubitably paradigmatic, its Pink Panther – while retaining a certain strutting elegance – is longer, thinner, as if the poverty of the Third World had seeped into Mr Harris's inks.

* * *

All right, I caught a couple of you there swaying in the ranks. Stand at ease. As Christian Metz, never one to mince matters, has declared: 'Prosthesis is to the leg as the cybernetic message is to the human phrase.' Edwards's *Return* is funny in spasms, Christopher Plummer smugs through the David Niven 'Phantom' role, Peter Sellers – whom I persist in wanting to give of his best – is sublime now and then, when he seems to improvise above the call of the script, but elsewhere dismayingly costive, chilly, dead-eyed. He desperately needs a tailor-made part, if it calls for a Savile row of writers to provide the requisite empirical clothes. This remains a huge talent inadequately suited.

Stanley Donen's *Lucky Lady* is a nerveless package, a sort of belated Xmas stocking stuffed to the kneecap with all the goodies an anxious parent has seen his neighbours' rich kiddies toying with during the previous year. The wrapping itself – in cinematic terms, a clouded lensful of soft focus – keeps events safely on the ad pages of something like a colour mag. The story, concocted by Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz, is period, with late-flapperish, dapper credit drawings, opening in Tijuana, Mexico, 1930. Liza Minnelli is a gangster's widow and chantoozie, Claire; Burt Reynolds, in his minty new image (*vide* the disastrous Bogdanovich *At Long Last Love*), her fumble-fingered lover and low-key stud, Walker; Gene Hackman is Kibby, an unexplained not-quite-a-gentleman down on his luck, who joins them after a shave in their booze-running operations and proves invaluable both as second string in bed and boat, quickly gaining equal if not superior status. With as straight a face as musterable, I might note that – with *Paint Your Wagon* and Lumet's *Lovin' Molly* – it would appear that two men to one woman is the current Hollywood-scene ratio. Lucky ladies, indeed. The sets are extravagantly awe-inspiring, with John Barry coming on as the Ken Adam of bars and boudoirs; the dialogue is brash and nippy (Claire, regarding her stunning new mansion, 'It's so quiet you could hear a fish fart'); the end, as has been widely reported, vexed – happy, after preview audiences had turned in their cards, whereas Reynolds and Hackman had wanted to be killed. It don't make much never mind, what with Bessie Smith on the omnipresent phonograph as a bonus and the whole feel of the piece that of an aborted musical. Amazing how so many bonuses fail to add up to a good.

The Ozu retrospective at the National Film Theatre, a chronological assembly of all of his works to have survived, begins 2 January. Those who know him for his quietistic, floor-level later films may be surprised by his earlier movies (the term is appropriate in that the camera did more, once in a while, than just sit, Zen-like, and the plots and words and even faces were aware of American cinema: see, for instance, *What Did the Lady Forget?* (23 January), with its drinking, smoking Japanese Jean Arthur and mentions of Clark Gable and other US matinée idols. East and West met mind-bendingly.

For what the game's worth, some titles that made my job justifiable and enjoyable during 1975: *California Split*, *A Private Enterprise*, *Black Holiday*, *The Mattei Affair*, *French Connection Number 2*, *Nashville*, *Return From Africa*, *Marjoe*, *Night Moves*, *Smile*, *Young Frankenstein*,

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Distant Thunder, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More*, *Hester Street*. Fold this section down the middle and do your own Rorschach test on this column. Better, as a genuine extra comp, £5 to the first entry opened on 12 January correctly listing the directors.

Records

Bayan Northcott

Viva Voce

Plainchant and Polyphony from Medieval Germany *Nonesuch H–71312* £2.25
Musicke of Sundrie Kindes (Renaissance secular music from 1480–1620) *L'Oiseau-Lyre 12 BM 203–6* (4 LPs) £8.95
Monteverdi: Vespers of 1610; Mass 'in illo tempore' *Archiv 2723 043* (3 LPs) £7.50
Bach: Christmas Oratorio *BASF/harmonia mundi 59 21749* (3 LPs) £9.50

The Thomaskirche Graduale is an early 14th-century compilation of plainchant melodies that had doubtless already been in daily use for centuries. Yet its anonymous scribe can scarcely have suspected the baroque splendours one of his entries was going to inspire in the *Credo* of a B Minor Mass by a cantor of the same great church in Leipzig 400 years later – any more than Bach, in his turn, can have anticipated the extraordinary uses to which subsequent composers from Berlioz to Peter Maxwell Davies have put the immemorial Gregorian tradition. If, however, unadorned plainsong itself now strikes the average listener as a pretty rarefied experience, the main reason could well be the style of performance – a kind of unctuous undulation – which has gained general acceptance as the orthodox manner since the turn of this century.

Without sacrificing scholarly decorum, the Schola Antiqua of New York under their director R. John Blackley have put the excitement back into the tradition in their new Nonesuch recording – largely by forsaking attitudes of generalised piety to focus once more upon the compositional shapes of the chants themselves. Phrasing is live and ductile, antiphonal effects are clearly articulated and climaxes often attain a fervent luminosity. A well-contrasted selection from the Thomaskirche Graduale is further diversified by the insertion of some early polyphonic pieces from other German sources – often sounding strangely modern in their coolly dissonant progressions – and pristine tones of recorder and vielle also reverberate through the spacious acoustic from time to time. Expecting to take this disc in shortish extracts, I have found it impossible to switch off.

If plainchant remained a potent compositional source throughout the 16th century, it was increasingly rivalled by – and sometimes even combined with – the alternative possibilities of folk music, courtly dance forms and newly emergent keyboard techniques. *Musicke of Sundrie Kindes*, devised and directed by the young lutenist, Anthony Rooley, at last offers a comprehensive listener's guide to the secular side of this bewilderingly diverse era. The arrangement of the items, almost 100 in roughly chronological order within their various national traditions, is enlightening in itself, though Rooley's tendency to go for typical examples of individual genres rather than for great names makes some of his detailed listings look a bit scrappy – or so I thought the English selection until I actually began to listen to the delicately flowering lines of Robert Fayrfax's 'Thatt was my woo', with which it begins, in Emma Kirkby's tranced rendering.

In fact the contrasts of performing style across these eight sides are almost as fascinating as the contents themselves. The Consort of Musicke may adjure the more raucous outdoor instruments, but their rebecs and rauschpfeifes can deliver as earthy a saltarello as their bandoras and great bass lutes a sad, stately pavan. The contributions of the six vocalists, whether solo or in consort under the direction of Andrew Parrott, are even more remarkable in their progress from the still faintly medieval stiffness of Jacob Obrecht's *Pater noster* to the dizzying sophistications of Gesualdo's 'Mille volte il dio moro' – surely the most chromatic music before Schoenberg – by way of such items as Jean Mouton's miraculously fresh 'La la la l'oysillon du bois'. It is a pity that the grand cultural sweep of the whole enterprise should be somewhat qualified by rather airless recording and a distinctly sketchy accompanying booklet.

Nothing more strikingly exemplifies the heady mix of styles as the High Renaissance slipped over into the Baroque than the great collection of church music which Monteverdi published in 1610. The *Mass 'in illo tempore'* with its luxuriously sinking sequences is a consciously backward-looking essay in post-Palestrinan counterpoint. The *Vespers* looks far forward in the declamatory choral textures of its *Dixit Dominus* and the leapfrogging orchestral *Sonata sopra 'Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis'*, yet the most dramatic pages of its concluding *Magnificat* arise from the pitting of solo outbursts and echo effects of utmost floridity against the serene unfolding of the old *Magnificat* plainchant. The new Archiv release is, I think, the first to record Monteverdi's collection all together, including the sublime alternative *Magnificat* he added for smaller forces. The six soloists in this German production are in fact all British, including the countertenor Paul Esswood and the tenor Ian Partridge. They are supported by a scholarly instrumental ensemble and well focused choral singing from the Regensburger Domspatzen, all recorded 'in perspective', so to speak, to suggest the spaces of a great cathedral. The conductor, Hanns-Martin Schneidt, avoids both the dryness that has passed for authenticity in some quarters and the somewhat relentless flamboyance that others have taken for Renaissance style. At first I thought his direction a little lacking in rhythmic attack, but it has a compensating expressiveness which should wear well.

Listeners to Radio 3 on Christmas Day will already have heard the new *Christmas Oratorio* in one delectable, indigestible session, although Bach intended its six constituent cantatas for performance on as many successive days. This is a release I find rather difficult seriously to fault. Perhaps Gerhard Schmidt-Gaden's convincing, lively tempi just marginally run away with him in some of the more exuberant choruses, perhaps the tendency to push key words at the listener in the chorales is a bit mannered; and of course boy soloists, however authentic, can scarcely be expected to sustain Bach's burgeoning lines with the assurance of women. But the BASF pair almost do, whilst the Evangelist of Theo Altmeyer is quite outstanding in his mature, unforced virtuosity. Instrumentally, such things as the Collegium Aureum's pungent oboes d'amore are a joy, easily cutting through the light, lithe textures of the Tölz Boys' Choir, and contrasting with the much louder trumpets and softer flutes in the natural recording ambience fully to realise Bach's 'stepped' textures for once. Of course we can never know exactly how it all sounded in the Thomaskirche in 1734; maybe the solo voices cracked in the chill or the overworked town musicians scraped away with grumbling indifference. But the new version could well be something like Bach's imaginary ideal.

Gremlins managed to contribute no less than six misprints to my piece last week. I blush for them.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Dadbeat

Queen Danniella *Casino*
Le Grand Magic Circus *Roundhouse*
A Christmas Carol *Piccadilly*
Kidnapped at Christmas *Shaw*
Gulliver's Travels *Mermaid*

Danny la Rue, alias Queen Danniella, glides into Ruritania in a barge of burnished gold, then teeters up to the footlights to make his familiar greeting. 'Watcha mates,' he says, just to reassure us that under the Shaftesbury-Avenue Cleopatra there's a nice, normal guy, just like you and me. There has long been something distressingly conventional about Mr la Rue: now I have to report that his drag act shows definite signs of the industrial disease that so often afflicts original entertainers in successful middle age, creeping vinylitis or *plasticus praecox*. The symptoms are there, clear for all to see, as he coyly flirts with the treacly tot who has just chirped out 'just a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down'. 'Let's have a kiss,' says Queen Dan, giving the audience the sort of smirk you might expect of someone who is himself proving no mean competitor in the Tate & Lyle stakes. One of his songs is all about our island pessimism, which he is against: 'The one thing I treasure/Is giving you pleasure/The world is too gloomy by half.'

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A little later we get another, this time about life, which he favours: 'Funny how a broken heart/Can make a person say/What good is my life?' 'Let me live, let me live,' adds the chorus helpfully, in case we hadn't got the point.

Only occasionally do we get hints of an old, sharp, bitchy la Rue: for example, his spangled Dietrich, admitting 'this isn't make-up, it's polyfilla'. Mostly, he would be better described as a suburban cul-de-sac; and that goes for the show as a whole, too. The story, which tells how a ravenous millionairess tries to steal the nation-state of Entertainia from Danniella, is the merest excuse for South American dances, simulated cartoons, Hollywood nostalgia, burlesque ballet and, of course, endless verbal cracks. There's one about Ted Heath's organ, and another about curry knocking people flat 'because it's made with Kit-e-Kat'. The Loch Ness monster is 'Cyril Smith having a swim', and the answer to 'who's Googie Withers?' is 'everybody's – in cold weather'. It is, in fact, the usual mix that passes for pantomime and 'family entertainment' nowadays; and I imagine that most good, protective parents would prefer to subject their children to something like the *Grand Magic Circus*, notwithstanding the intermittent injection of untranslated French and the odd materialisation of people in that state which my own brood likes to call 'stark bare naked'.

Actually, be warned: they pick a daddy from the audience, half-strip him, and thrust him into a spoof orgy. It was only by bunching up very small, and feebly passing myself off as a theatre programme, that I avoided this adventure. In general, the show is much the same genial, indolent spree we've seen in previous years, this time involving a wolf-child, a travelling circus and an updated Cinderella. I liked the rabbit who produces a toy conjurer from its hat, the ugly sister who saws off her toes in order to fit into the slipper, and the red light that the actors switch on whenever they are saying something significant and relevant, such as the solemnly reiterated 'fear is a noble and sometimes a useful thing'. But there were times, especially in the second half, when I began to suspect there might be a little truth in the humourous self-accusation made by the show's sole begetter, Jerome Savary – that his stint in London is just a rehearsal for the serious business of performing in France. There could be more drive and discipline without any loss of informality.

Pan, Pooh, Toad, Treasure Island: there isn't much original stuff about, and what there is doesn't prove very remarkable. The cut-rate *Christmas Carol* has a most unflinty, unmenacing Scrooge in Howell Evans – and lighting that seems wilfully designed to make Marley uncreepy. For better or worse or both, it keeps pretty close to the original. This means that Dickens is actually seen at a podium, reading bits of himself: not, I fear, a very dramatic device, since he is by no means an Emlyn Williams. Willis Hall's *Kidnapped at Christmas* sends two naughty convicts scampering about the auditorium, pursued by lumpen warders and surly police: kids versus parents, you could say. It is all very good-humoured and anti-authoritarian, just what your turned-on child psychologist might order; but it didn't appeal to my nine-year-old opinion poll, who prefers illusion, tension and excitement to a lot of well-intentioned audience participation. 'When is the play going to begin?' he asked, a bit helplessly, not long before it ended. A better bet is certainly the Mermaid's revival of *Gulliver*, which adds William Rushton's lively book (and portly form) to the colourful back projections originally designed by Sean Kenny. The yahoos turn out to be football hooligans, Laputa a demented space station, and the Struldbrugs comatose victims of the kind of doctors who kept General Franco officially alive for so long: literate children should enjoy it.

Television

Eric Korn

Ghoul Log

It is generally conceded that there is a supernatural element about Christmas, although television wisely restrains its expression. Some kinds of ghostliness are more acceptable than others, however, and we prefer tidings of unease and terror to comfort and joy. Alien horrors – whether from the Other World or from other worlds – are only half as effective if they intrude not into the familiar but into a scene displaced into past or future: as was repeatedly demonstrated. There were massive daily sermons from *Star Trek* (BBC-1), apparently the early episodes before whimsy set in, all heavily freighted with guilty unease about America's world role. By contrast, Rabbi Who was in short supply this year, with only an omnibus version of the recent serial *Genesis of the Daleks* (BBC-1). G.o.D. moved in mysterious ways: for once the Galaxy was not saved from the greatest menace in its history, because of the Doctor's bourgeois liberal scruples about strangling the Daleks in their cradles. Had he done so, the universe would have switched to probability track two, and all those programmes, Dalek T-shirts and toothpaste, would retroactively never have existed.

Nearest to the present was *The Night That Panicked America* (BBC-1), directed by Joseph Sargent, a dramatisation of and around the Orson Welles radio updating and relocation to New Jersey of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*, which maybe sent a million or more Americans skittering on 30 October 1938. The script was at perhaps excessive pains to point out that the world was suffering post-Munich jitters; radio waves of anger and fear were circulating over the bright and darkened lands of the earth, and everyone was pretty much ready to take to the hills anyway. In the studio the only panic was getting the right noise for the Martian cylinder opening: a coffee jar inside a loo did the trick.

Paul Shenar, as Orson, gleefully orchestrated the whole caper, looking not unlike a Fighting Machine. Meanwhile, around the country, various archetypical characters reacted. It remained unaccountable: perhaps the moment of panic, like the moment of death or orgasm, is objectively incommunicable. But we had a lot of the original broadcast, which will do until some daring director interrupts *Nationwide* with a flash about something strange on Cobham Common. Then we'll see who keeps his cool.

The impossibly anomalous time scale (from Mars to New York in a couple of hours) did not destroy the illusion, but actually heightened the terror. This also served David Rudkin in his adaptation of M. R. James's *The Ash Tree* (BBC-1); the action flickers, sometimes ambiguously, between the 18th century (rational new squire, Edward Petherbridge, briskly planning architectural improvements) and the 17th (guilty witch-burning ancestor). The mood was pastoral, rather too beautifully composed: but when someone remarks 'the dead are dead', you know it won't be long. When the Things were made manifest, there was no let-down. Behind that donnish medievalising cosiness, M. R. James had a direct line to a very particular kind of nastiness, more to do with a bachelor's dread of the living body than anything dead or undead. Described with detachment, the ash-tree yielded a clutch of chittering wrong-legged globular creatures, rather like so many Magic Christmas Puddings; but I doubt if many viewers giggled except nervously.

The big fright number was the nearly complete print of Isherwood-Bachardy *Frankenstein: the True Story* (BBC-2), a title that misleadingly suggests fidelity to Mary Shelley's original. Made for television in 1973, it was later dismantled and patched for the cinema screen as clumsily as Dr F.'s own botched chimera. There was time (nearly three hours) for an unhurried, massy narration, that could have carried a heavier philosophical cargo without capsizing. Henry Clerval (David McCallum), in the book a mere confidant and victim, became an initiator of the Faustian scheme, and – after a timely heart-attack – supplies the creature's brain. The monster (Michael Sarrazin) is born all too beautiful; Dr Frankenstein (Leonard Whiting) is considerably affected and takes his new friend to the opera. But the process reverses; Hyde-like uglification sets in, though the horror engendered by his only a little unsightly countenance seems inexplicable.

Another major insertion was James Mason's ripely gloating Dr Polidori, a villainous mesmerist with oriental servitors, who constructs a female consort. The real-life Dr Polidori was one of the original ghost-story writing party, and though Mary Shelley, in her preface, calls him 'poor Polidori', his novel, *The Vampyre*, has engendered at least as many bad movies as hers. The major point of the novel, about the brutalising effects of being alienated from human society, is here replaced by a rather mawkish ultra-high camp point about the decay of beauty: Jack Smight's teleplay has many elegances and beautifully preserves the original Arctic denouement, and though numerous victims die picturesquely, there are no ketchup horrors.

Most stylish and least publicised was Andrew Davies's brief dramatisation of Poe's *The Imp of the Perverse* (BBC-2),

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Poe's curious tardy transatlantic Byronism is nowhere better exemplified than in this tale of a Raskolnikov figure who murders his benefactor without motive, and confesses because he is perfectly safe from detection. Beautifully acted by Michael Kitchen, Philip Stone and Lalla Ward, produced with authority and economy by Louis Marks, it was easily the most intelligent of the Christmas Creepies. What frightened me most was Fyfe Robertson's commercial for Concorde, *Round the World in 80 Hours*.

Elsewhere it was Christmas; ITV gave us the admirable Flanders-Horowitz *Captain Noah and his floating Zoo* and a boisterous *Jonah and the Whale* with unlikely Rodney Bewes, splendidly sheepish at dodging God's column: 'My name is Kish and I suffer from gallstones' (Scottish TV). *Presents Past* (BBC-2) displayed enchanting Victorian acrobatic automata, elegant Edwardian toy motor cars and a breathtaking Wright Brothers Flyer, while Jonathan Miller's *Alice*, ideal present for child or adult, continued to moulder unseen in the BBC archives. Why? There was lots more. Kojak actually made it to New York, Basil Brush, the louchest animal on the box, grew embarrassingly reverent describing the Nativity and took his lamented leave, and the Queen (all channels) threw a stone into a pond.

Weekend Competition

No 2393 **Set by Tourvel**

Verse translations, please, of 'La Patience' by Philippe Jaccottet which appeared in his collection *L'Ignorant* published by Gallimard in 1958. By 16 January.

Dans les cartes à jouer abattues sous la lampe
comme les papillons écroulés poussiéreux,
à travers le tapis de table et la fumée,
je vois ce qu'il vaut mieux ne pas voir affleurer
lorsque le tintement de l'heure dans les verres
annonce une nouvelle insomnie, la croissante
peur d'avoir peur dans le resserrement
du temps,
l'usure du corps, l'éloignement des défenseurs.
Le vieil homme écarte les images passées
et, non sans réprimer un tremblement, regarde
la pluie glacée pousser la porte du jardin.

Result of No 2390 **Set by Martin Fagg**

The 'men of action' who choose records on a certain radio programme tend to be vice-chancellors, civil servants, etc. Competitors were asked to describe a day in the life of one of these humdrum worthies in the style associated with more obvious action-men.

Report **by Spiro Keats**

A week of dozily shirked opportunities, I'm afraid. Most competitors mistakenly attempted to bulk out their days-in-the-life with drama and thrills, when of course the point was that the quotidiana should remain brutally devoid of incident. The giant cash haul awaiting the next outstanding comp. entry is being held over for the new year; £4 each to be going on with.

At nine I kicked the door open and went in, fast. They were waiting. The meeting lasted four hours, one used by me to blast the Deans on admissions. Nobody yelled at me. Lunch was a sandwich, a flat pint and the mail, in my office. At two the call came. I made London by three, found the UGC man waiting and told him so he'd stay told. His teeth chattered. Gloria said no dice as I left. The Whitehall mob at the Bridges (Dental) Inquiry didn't like what I told them. I wrote my report while they said so. I headed for home, ate supper over a chess problem and the estimates. Then to bed with the Rothschild Report. I didn't need any barbiturates.

PETER ALEXANDER

Perceval Puckle crooked a determined little finger.

'Sometimes,' he said, 'people ask me why I have dared to attempt the derivative diphthongs in Old Norse. The answer is quite simple. Because they're there.'

He poured himself a slug of Founder's port and drained it in 43 appreciative sips.

'I can recall the night we were down to our last Saga, and then that brave fellow, Titus Oakapple, walked out to 'The Waste Land'. He knew, you see, that there wasn't enough for all of us, academically. That was the action of a man, an Englishman. He may be . . .' – and here his voice sank to a whisper – 'in a poly, but he'll get his reward in another place. Probably Sussex.'

There was a silence round the long table. Fourteen grim faces had turned their attention to a more serious matter. *Somebody* had passed the port *the wrong way*.

M. K. CHEESEMAN

The Borough Treasurer looked at his wife, still asleep in bed. She had the kind of gritty female-ness he found irresistible; it's not every woman who runs a playgroup, he reflected.

After dressing, he sprinted downstairs and wolfed a plate of Shreddies in one minute flat. Grabbing his executive briefcase, he ran to his Morris 1100 and leapt in. As he turned the ignition key, the engine roared on full choke. Within minutes he was cruising into his reserved parking space at the Town Hall. Life is good, he thought; very good. It's not every man who sits all day on a million pounds of ratepayers' money. And weren't the Masons making their customary clandestine approaches? 'Icing on the cake,' he chuckled, and in that moment the little finger of his right hand crooked involuntarily.

TIM HOPKINS

'How many sheets did you say, Dean?' whispered the VC. That's it, thought Tertia grimly, and checked the catch on the Smith-Corona. It was off. The Dean mopped his brow. 'Well, Sir, I reckon on about three thou.' The VC sighed, and leaning across to shake the ash off his iridium-tipped, monogrammed Numero Siete he touched the tabulator key. The carriage shot across and knocked the goblet of Pisado do Gato into the Dean's lap. As the rat gaped at the fluid eating into his crotch, the VC slid across the desk, twisted his shot-silk B-Ed. gown around the Dean's neck, and thrust the Dean's face down on to the platten. The ghastly green light crept closer and closer, and the Dean screamed. '3001,' whispered the VC. 'That's the last copy you make. But keep still, or it'll be blurred.' And he slammed the cover down. He hated waste.

C. VITA-FINZI

Assiac

Chess Board

No 1363 **Hell of a Job**

I am quoting Bojan Kurajica, winner of the £700 first prize in the Bank of Dubai Open, a six rounds Swiss with 264 competitors. They had to play two games on each of the three days with a time limit of 48 moves in two hours and the grim decider of a ten-minutes game obviating any adjournment session. Though badly pressed by young Speelman the Yugoslav grandmaster fought through to a 5½ points victory, with as many as five bunched ½ point behind: Jonathan Mestel and David Goodman the 1974 and 1975 under-18 world champions, Richard Britton, 1975 British under-18 champion, and the 'veterans' Max Fuller and John Littlewood. As many as 27 scored 4½. The whole event, spread over two weekends at the Islington Green Youth Centre was organised by Leonard Barden and Stewart Reuben for the *Evening Standard* and attracted well over 1,400 contenders, a splendid boost. Tony Miles qualified for the Cutty Sark prize and got his hard-earned 1,000 quid. Brilliancy prize for Michael Stean, Black against M. J. Staples.

1) e4,c5; 2) Ktf3,e6; 3) d4,cd:; 4) Ktd4:,Ktf6; 5) Ktc3,d6; 6) f4,Ktc6; 7) Ktf3,Be7; 8) Bd3,Qb6; 9) Qe2,e5; 10) f5,Bd7; 11) Bd2,0-0; 12) 0-0-0, Ktd4; 13) Ktd4:,ed:; 14) Ktd5,Ktd5:; 15) ed:,Bf6; 16) Qh5? Looks good as, apart from guarding against the threat of . . . Bf5:; 17) Bf5:,d3; it also threatens the aggressive push of the g-pawn. Even so, it loses by force, **Rac8!; 17) g4,Ba4!; 18) b3** Forced since 18) g5? is punished by . . . Bc2:!; 19) Bc2:,Rc2:†!; 20) Kc2:,d3†; 21) Kd3:,Qd4†; etc, **Bb3:!; 19) ab:, Qb3:; 20) Bg5** Of course not Qh3 which loses the Q after . . . Rc2†, **Rc2:†!; 21) Bc2:,Rc8; 22) Rd2, d3; 23) Kd1,Rc2:** Michael considered this a more attractive win than dc:†; anyway it's all over.

Just enough space for a pretty brevity won by Gerald Bennett, Black against Kakic.

1) e4,Ktf6; 2) e5,Ktd5; 3) c4,Ktb6; 4) d4,d6; 5) ed:,cd:; 6) Ktf3,g6; 7) Ktc3,Bg7; 8) Be3,0-0; 9) Qd2 Gerald's comment that this overambitious plan of a premature Bh6 is the seedcorn for White's speedy defeat, **Bg4; 10) Bh6,Ktc6; 11) Bg7:,Kg7:; 12) h3,Bf3:; 13) gf:,e7; 14) d5,Ktd4; 15) Qd1,Qf6; 16) Be2,Qf4; 17 b3,f5; 18 0-0,Ktbd7; 19) Kg2, Ktf6!; 20) Ktb5,Ktb5:; 21) cb:,th5; 22) Rc1,Rac8; 23) Rh1,Qg5†; 24) Kh2,Ktf4; 25 Rg1,Qh4; 26) Rg3, Rc1:; 0-1.**

The 4-pointer is the brilliant conclusion of a correspondence game and to put it within the reach of 'beginners' I'll give the very helpful hint that three successive sacrificial offers of a daring White piece (each unacceptable) soon decide the issue. For 6 ladder-points **B** is a draw achieved in a few moves, an instructive little piece. **C** (for 7) is a win achieved in 6 moves, and quite a beauty. Helpful hint: under-promotion! Usual prizes, entries by 12 January.

A: Tchajenkov-Aravin: /r5k1/p5pp/1pp3rb/3p1Q1Kt/2ktP4/1RP5/q1P3PP/2B1R2K/.

B: Troitzky: /16/PbP5/8/kt4p1p/5P1k/7P/5K2/.

C: Kubbel: /8/k4p2/P1P5/pP3p2/6P1/3b3K/16/.

Report on No 1359 *Set 5 December*

A: 15) Kte6:!! wins at least the exchange with a winning game after a few moves.

B: *Key:* **Qc4,dc:; 2) Bd7††;** or . . . **ed:; 2) Qe2††;** or . . . **e4; 2) Re4:††;** or . . . **Bd4:; 2) Qc8††;** or . . . **Kt any; 2) Qd5††.**

C: 1) Be6:,Ktf5 (if . . . a3; 2) c5 draws); **2) Bf5,a3; 3) Bb1,Kta4; 4) Ba2,Ktc3; 5) Bb3,Kte2†; 6) Ke4,Ktc1; 7) Ba2!!,Kta2:; 8) Kd3,Ktb4†** (or . . . Ktc1†; 9) Kc2,a2; 10) Kb2, etc); **9) Kc3,a2; 10) Kb2,** drawing. If 7) Kd4?? Black wins by . . . Ktb3:†; 8) Kc3,Ktd2!!; 9) c5,Kd7; 10) e4,Kc6;

Prizes: C. Allen, R. Brown, J. R. Holland, D. H. R. Stallybrass, J. D. Taylor.

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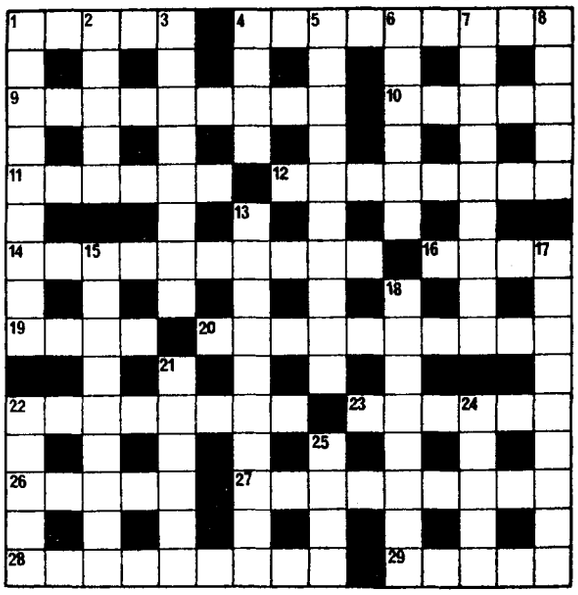
PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1145, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 13 Jan.



ACROSS

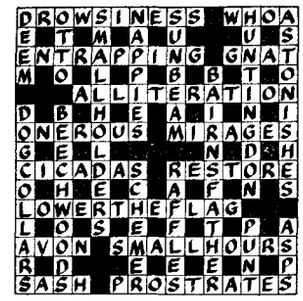
1. Where poems are translated (5).
4. Dental inspection necessary but it is free (4, 5).
9. Sensible things make the reverse of a bloomer after a little philosophy (9).
10. Specify condition (5).
11. Don't leave mother in control (6).
12. Transposed colour without line (8).
14. Advance measure provided by leading worker? (10).
16. If back before Lent the water would be fragrant (4).
19. Novelist who is the first to be sold? (4).
20. Surprise inspections locate threats to royalty (10).
22. Scientists keep soldiers' secrets in boxes (8).
23. Learned man about to assault a shopkeeper (6).
26. Story-teller shows first attitude in reverse (5).
27. Poet given a crest by a king (9).
28. 'Webster was much —— by death' (Eliot) (9).
29. Disdainfully dismiss the servant (5).

DOWN

1. Mail price revised as a matter of experience (9).
2. Writing up about drink as source of energy (5).
3. Means of getting tied up – as the cow says about the wedding thing! (8).
4. 'Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited ——' (Goldsmith) (4).
5. Tart with finery appearing in society (10).
6. Has provided accommodation and something to eat (6).
7. Sad choir softly turns ecstatic (9).
8. Make corrections, taking people to heart (5).
13. Meat won't move for these food carriers (10).
15. Players who become star performers when they have lost their hair (9).
17. Rising again with most of the others pressing (9).
18. Place in French art reserved for architecture (8).
21. Veil a politician in trickery (6).
22. To swot a page is a painful experience (5).
24. One among those who hoped roses would bloom (5).
25. Dressed in mid-second-century fashion (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1143



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th e

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NEW STATESMAN
Vol. 91 No 2337

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